Marken and its People

Being some account written from time to time both during and after visits covering some considerable space of time upon this most curious and comparatively unknown Island — (Unknown in spite of the fact that thousands of tourists visit it each year — but of the character or the life of these strange people they know little or nothing —) Now set forth and pictured by

George Wharton Edwards

Moffat Yard & Company
1912

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Marken and its People

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To
My Beloved
Lady Anne

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Marken

MARKEN, pronounced "Marriker" by the islanders, is really a number of small sandy hillocks divided by shallow canals and reenforced by low strong dikes upon which are mounds of earth brought from the mainland and connected by narrow brick-paved paths, whereon the wooden houses are built upon piling. In the spring when the waters of the Zuyder Zee are swollen by the freshets, and during the severe storms that sweep this vast shallow inner sea, the dikes are flooded, and communication between the islands is often difficult. The angry waters dash against and flood the houses, and the dwellers are forced to seek the upper

floors of the houses for comfort. There being no stairways in the Marken houses, ladders are used, somewhat like those on the blunt-bowed barges in the canals.

I am unable to find the Zuyder Zee (pronounced "Sowider Zay") on any map of Holland dated before the thirteenth century. The Rivers Ysel and Vlie then divided the provinces of Friesland and North Holland, which were really one. The Zuyder Zee, it appears, came into existence when, after the great inundations of the thirteenth century, the low lands were submerged and Friesland divided. Three centuries elapsed after the last of these floods before Marken appeared upon any map, and it is not improbable that the singular people, whose descendants now arouse so much curiosity, were driven there by the terrors of the Inquisition which flourished upon the mainland during the Spanish occupation. At any rate, they are of the Reformed Church, and cut off from the influence of the Franks and unmolested, they thus preserved the quaint characteristics which distinguish them to this day. Thus they remain in

a sense a people by themselves with a sort of language of their own, an indescribable dialect which staggers even a Dutchman.

The Markenite thinks so highly of himself that, in common with the Frieslander, he does not like to be called a Hollander, and he really is of a different type, being tall in stature, heavy in frame, with strong jaws, somewhat sallow of complexion, and with piercing eyes of a bluish-gray. This description applies equally to the women, who are indeed far from being handsome according to our standards. Over on the mainland and especially to the southward, the people have a decided attachment to the Catholic religion, and there is a considerable infusion of foreign blood by marriage, due no doubt to the roving disposition of the Hollander, as well as to the migration to the north from the provinces during the eighty years' war of the Huguenots, and the swarthy cosmopolitans of Zeeland affiliated with the Spanish invaders after the occupation. The attitude of the Marken people towards the Hollander and other strangers, is, as a rule, one of antipathy

and strict isolation. No Marken woman marries outside of Marken, nor apparently do they emigrate. Occasionally I have seen one or two groups of the women in the streets of Amsterdam resplendent in the costume, and followed invariably by a curious crowd, to whom they are as strange as to the tourist. They are not very polite in manner, yet they do not intend to be rude, I am convinced. If you speak to them they will invariably salute you with a guttural "Goe'n Dag!" or "Goe'n aovond saomen!" I know that they resent being considered as curiosities, for they have told me so while I was living with them. Of course there are those who keep the shops where doubtful curios are to be bought, but the keepers of these shops are not well liked by the people, and as it is these whom the tourist sees and barters with on the excursion to the Island, naturally he thinks that the rest are of the same cloth. But could the tourists, male and female, hear some of the amused and contemptuous criticism of themselves by the ringletted vrouwes over their teacups, after the staring throng leaves the narrow streets to their

normal quietness, their ears, I am quite sure, would burn.

The tourist seldom, if ever, stops over night on Marken, there is indeed no accommodation for him, but for me there was no risk of discomfort, armed as I was with a letter of introduction to "Den Heer Appel," sometime Burgomeester of the community. When I informed Mynheer of the hostelry at Monnickendam, over a friendly glass of fine port, of my intention to stop with the Markenites he gasped, and with a vehemence and detail which I thought unnecessary, related certain tales which I had heard before. The people of the Island are, though prudish to a degree, most singularly frank in some things hidden by common consent, and the line dividing the delicate from the indelicate is rather attenuated on Marken. The old slander of the personal uncleanliness of the Hollander loses little by repetition, but I must say that their cleanliness, while not perfect, is not so superficial as reported. They have a little word equivalent to our "neat." It is "Netjes," and really the Marken people *are*

neat in their persons, quite as neat as any of the Continental people. As for their houses, they are continually being scrubbed and polished. But (whisper) there are fleas—big ones, too—and everywhere. However, the householders know how to deal with them as I was later to discover for myself.

Since the railway people began to exploit them at $1.50 per ticket (excursion), and the Markenites have been brought somewhat more in contact with civilization, they have undoubtedly lost many of their unsophisticated and proverbially primitive ways and manners. The many tarred wooden houses on the different "terpen," as the hummocks are called, which are often crudely painted in green and red stripes at the gables, do yet preserve their quaintness, and upon the arrival of the boat laden with tourists, the children, some of whom are veritable pests, gather on the dike and importune the visitors for money—"Baby cents" they scream, and at this shrill call out come the beggars and the old people who are forced to stay at home.

These are all the people of Marken seen by

the tourist; the better element remain behind closed doors while the throng of sightseers remain. On Sundays alone are the men to be seen. Then the narrow little harbor is thronged with the boats of the fishing fleet, more than one hundred and eighty of them, all with their bows pointed in the same direction, scrubbed clean and brightly varnished so that the wood seems like polished mahogany, and the tall masts are decked with the red, white and blue of Holland. The boats, called Tjalks, Boms, and Boiers, are very seaworthy, often sailing as far as the coast of Scotland, returning to their snug little harbor in the Gouwzee [pronounced Howsay] once in a week or ten days. Each boat is numbered on the bow, for registry, and on the stern is generally painted the name, such as "De Vrouw Geertij," [Gerty] or "De Jong Nikolaas," or "Niko" for short. Repeatedly the island has suffered from fire, as well as inundation, and in one of the houses on a sort of shelf is a comically diminutive fire engine or pump which is the sole protection of the island against its constantly threatening enemy, the peat fire, kept burning

on the hearth of each house. Formerly there were no chimneys, the smoke from the hearth escaping up through openings in the upper floor and the roof. The town or settlement is divided as aforesaid into eleven small hamlets, all built on mounds called "Terpen," and joined by narrow brick-paved paths and canals. On the twelfth "Terpen," or hillock, is the cemetery raised some fifteen feet above the water and surrounded by an iron railing in which is a high gate. Here the Markenite is laid to rest for a stated number of years, after which his remains are otherwise disposed of. My inquiries as to this matter troubled my informant greatly and very nearly cost me his confidence. I surmise, therefore, that the remains are, as is the case in Brittany, taken up and deposited in a sort of ossuary, but I could not get any further information upon the subject, so I did not pursue it. The funeral customs are unique, and there is so much ostentation that the Burgomeester is formulating rules which are to be enforced hereafter—tending to curb and restrict some of the customs. I shall here-

after describe a funeral as I witnessed it one blustery day in September, after the tourist season was over and Marken had lapsed into its normal calm.

The only tree upon Marken is on this cemetery mound, a poor looking poplar propped up with a stick, and looking, when I last saw it, as if it would not survive the coming winter storms. There is an abundance of grass grown, and the sight presented by the strangely costumed girls, boys and old men cutting and raking it on the meadows is most curious. As for the costume, it is so strange as to be remarkable even in this country of Holland, renowned for its peculiar dress. The men habitually wear a sort of divided skirt like knee-breeches of brown or blue-woolen stuff, very thick and stiff; a loose, plain jacket with a couple of gold or silver buttons on the collar, and on Sundays, a tall, silk, almost brimless hat. As for the women, their dress is very intricate and elaborate. How they ever manage all the strings and buttons without help is a mystery. Their head-dress consists of a miter-shaped cap or cylinder of pasteboard,

covered with some bright calico or often silk stitched with bright-colored ribbons, and surmounting a small muslin or lace cap called a "Muts." From beneath this helmet, cut straight across the forehead and almost on the level of the eyes, is a sort of "bang" or fringe of the yellowest imaginable hair, while from either temple hang two long golden curls almost down to the waist. The older women, indeed the most ancient of the dames, wear a fringe and curls of silk floss. The bodice is tightly laced with a plastron of flowered chintz, and thereafter is an incredible quantity of heavy woolen, and often silk, outstanding skirts and petticoats suspended from the hips over a wooden hoop. The girls and boys up to a certain age, say nine or ten, are dressed alike, and only to be distinguished by a button on the cap of the boy, and a rose on the cap of the girl, and what pests these boys and girls are to the stranger! While as for the artist —just let him open his sketch-book and the roadway is at once crowded with them before and behind him, above and below him! No less conservative in their customs than in their cos-

tumes the Markenites remain the strangest of all the Hollanders, and even these, their neighbors, can understand but little of the dialect which they use with one another, and, even at times, that worldly-wise old body, Vrouwe Marretje Thijsseus Teerhuis, occasionally, when one questions her too hard as to certain happenings on Oost Gouwzee [pronounced *Ost Howsay*], or the Wester Gouw, will relapse into strange gutturals, unintelligible to her questioner, and then only the purchase of a piece of "blue," or the expressed desire for a cup of tea will arouse her interest anew. It is to her that I owe my knowledge of much concerning Marken here set down, and the amount of tea which I consumed while acquiring this knowledge is almost incredible.

As I have said, the houses are of wood, some painted brightly, others only pitched or tarred. There is one house of stone, that of the Heer Pastoor, who possesses a small garden in which there were once, I am told, some trees. Vrouwe Marretje says that two trees have been ordered in Amsterdam for the Heer Pastoor's garden,

and that this fall they are to be brought over by boat and planted, adding that there will be a festival of presentation upon this occasion.

Then there are the church on Mittel Vlaar', as one of the "Terpen" is named, the school and the town offices. There are about one thousand people on Marken, and there is a doctor who lives there in the summer. He is not, however, a native. His fees are regulated by the Burgomeester, who is, by the way, a native, and I imagine, therefore, that his income must be a small one. They are a rugged, hardy race, quite equal to any emergency. Peaceful enough when let alone, they resent any attempt to coerce them, and there seems no power, either persuasive or threatening, that has any perceptible influence upon this people,—either their bodies or their minds. They pursue their own way though the skies fall, and the skies might fall a second time before they would allow an intruder to do otherwise than their way. They have a hard, independent, savage way, almost, of showing their dislike for strangers whom they suspect of insincerity, and they will, especially the

TYPE OF HOUSE

children, serve one such, nasty tricks. They intermarry and have small regard or respect for any outside their community. Even towards the Queen of Holland upon her last visit they were reserved, merely remarking that it is a pity she was not born a Markenite, and when she was escorted about by the Burgomeester they inquired why she did not leave her "Klompen" at the door, as is the custom on Marken when one enters a house. They assume that the sea, the sky, the shore, is theirs by right, and that if they felt inclined to assert their right, there are ways to accomplish it. They are thrifty, fond of their homes and children, hard workers and thoroughly honest and self-respecting. Marital infidelity and divorce is unknown among them. They are really habitual or hard drinkers; the days upon which they become very drunken are May Day and Christmas, the latter festival being a borrowed one from Volendam, and much frowned upon by the more conservative. On the anniversary of the Queen's Birthday, of late years, there has been a day of rejoicing. They all look healthy, seem happy in their own way,

and are well clothed. They are shrewd, clever, and honest to a fault. It is a matter of wonder that they have remained as they are, a distinct people for centuries, their men sailing the seas, content to fish for its treasures, and returning to spend their sunset days in their own little community and among their own people.

As may be seen then, Marken is unique in many respects, even to the Dutch themselves. Nearly all of its features and customs are distinct and unusual. The people have, as I have said, always intermarried and they have a sincere, inborn dislike and contempt for their neighbors on the mainland. Some authorities, as already intimated, claim for them Russian origin, others say that they are the descendants of some Oriental tribe, the character of their costume and some of their customs pointing to the latter, but it is all surmise and their origin will always be a matter and subject of dispute. After a certain age the Marken woman becomes a shrew and ugly in temper, but the younger ones, who have not yet come in contact with the sorrows of life, possess a charming

modesty, or else a shyness such as one cannot distinguish from it, and a certain freshness akin to beauty. On the Sabbath day the majority of these women sacrifice appearance to fashion, but it is a fashion that they invent and consider among themselves, and not concerned with that of the towns of the mainland. They then appear in rainbow array of silk, satin and lace, so stiffly arrayed in multitudinous petticoats that they can scarcely sit down. Their bodices are either of magenta, bright red, or purple, with absurd little coat-tails sticking out at the back, and their wide skirts have broad vertical stripes of dull blue and bright alternately, or vivid magenta ones with broad white stripes. Their ankles are visible for fully six inches in heavy-knitted white or dark-blue stockings, and on their feet are coarse leathern shoes with silver buckles. These seem more stylish to them than the white painted wooden "Klompen" formerly worn in all weathers, but now chiefly on wet days. Some of these young women have olive complexions with healthy red blood mantling under it, some have glossy brown-black hair, and

glorious straight dark eyebrows. Others are very fair, with milky-white, lovely columns of throats, and hair like burnished yellow gold, cut straight across the white brows in a thick bang, from under which gleam mischievous blue sparkling eyes. Straight as poplar trees, these girls have never known corsets. Their supple bodies move as nature intended; but they are shy and awkward beyond belief under one's scrutiny.

The men and women are musical among themselves when no stranger is nigh. Nearly all of them can sing well or tell a story, and so their gatherings are merry. Both sexes imbibe gin, and a sickly sweet wine looking like milk, and be it said, they are rather quarrelsome like all island people. The men often fight, and the tongues of the women when excited or angered are a matter of comment for the surrounding country people. The maidens will have but one sweetheart apiece, thus they are all paired off. Courting is done on Saturday nights, and usually at the fair one's hearth. The greatest liberty and license is permitted to them and ex-

cites no comment. But once married, Mrs. Grundy rarely, if ever, has cause to find fault with their actions. Such a thing as flirtation is unknown upon Marken. Virtue is unconscious.

The men are smart fishermen and born sailors. They are not good swimmers, many of them have never been overboard, although following the sea all their lives. Such a thing as bathing in the Zuyder Zee is unknown to the Islanders, who would be shocked at the bare mention of such a thing. The fishermen have some wonderful songs, which are indeed capital to them. Hauling the nets for hours is stiff work even for their brawny arms. I have heard them sing and seen the effect it produces upon them, and the work done to its rhythmic cadence. It is sung peculiarly, the sound expelled forcibly in vehement ejaculations, timed to their laborious movement when pulling at the oars or drawing in the heavy herring-nets. The song contains scores of verses, but certain catch-words form a nucleus 'round which the Dutch "chanty man" embroiders the daily topics.

Christmas on Marken

I JOURNEYED all the way from Paris for the purpose of studying the celebration on Marken. "Sint Niklaas," the Dutch Santa Claus, is as highly honored there, perhaps more so, than he is with us. The date of celebration, however, is on the night of the Fifth of December, and for the previous three weeks, all Marken is preparing for this day. Here in this strange village, the children, always in evidence, now are almost crazed with excitement, the younger ones, to whom the recollection of the last celebration is perchance dim, are in a fever of expectation. Their exuberant fancies are stimulated by tales of wonders in store for them,

and vivid word pictures of the attributes of the good "Sint." And not only is this a great day for the children, but the "Grown-Ups," too, look forward to it even as they do to the grosser joys of Kermis, for this is the great occasion for the presentation of gifts, gifts curious, suitable, valuable and often most ridiculous. The greatest care is spent in devising them. For weeks beforehand members of families are busy in secluded corners fashioning "Surprises." Everyone knows that mysteries are in store, but this only enhances the interest in the occasion, and it is very bad form to even notice the hurried concealment of an object in the hands of a person surprised in its preparation.

The Zuyder Zee was frozen over, and skating parties of happy, merry, laughing people were met on every hand that bright cold morning, when I clambered down the dike of Monnickendam and climbed into the small, red, horse sleigh on my way across the ice to the settlement miles away. A cold fierce wind blew that made my nose and cheeks smart and tingle. Against the sky, the snow-covered dikes appeared a dazzling

white, while above them the tiled roofs of the houses formed a thin low scarlet line dominated by the huge plum-colored tower of the old church, and a neighboring windmill beyond, the arms of which were motionless. Five gulden, the driver demanded for the trip over, and really the price was not exorbitant, although Mynheer, behind the door of the smoking room at Monnickendam, gesticulated emphatically in the negative. But heedless of his despairing shrug, I agreed, and thereby lost caste with him. Time has since softened his resentment, but he has, I am convinced, never quite felt the same towards me for not heeding his friendly admonition. The driver, now that I had engaged him at his own price, was most friendly and loquacious. The day, he said, was made expressly for our trip over the ice to Marken. When he was young, he rarely remembered a winter when the Zuyder Zee was not frozen over, but these later years, the winters had been so mild that there had been but few days of real good skating, save in the north, in Friesland. When he had satisfied his powers of description upon these points, and

his curiosity as well, upon some intimate details as to my age, my profession, my wealth and so forth, all of which I very patiently communicated, with more or less candor, he lapsed into silence and withdrew unto himself.

Meanwhile the tall bony horse was bearing us rapidly along the fairly swept path of smooth ice among the skaters, who were speeding rapidly by us in both directions. Sleds and sleighs, there were before and behind us of every size and shape, some of them pushed by skaters from behind, others drawn by boys and men gliding abreast in pairs and threes, with long green painted poles, brass knobbed, held before them horizontally. Their skates are long bladed, low, and pointed upwards in a graceful curve, tipped sometimes with a small brass ball or acorn. The people are mostly upon "pleasure bent," but occasionally one notes a peasant, man or woman, bearing a couple of shining brass cans suspended from the shoulders by a yoke with chains. There are small boats, too, with sail set, moving along on temporary runners, in which stolid youths sit in indolent postures. The snow has been clean

swept, leaving broad paths of fine dark ice, and bordering these paths which lead out to the horizon are tents, pavilions and wooden booths, in which are sold hot drinks and "Waffelen," dear to the peasants. There are tall masts hung with banners containing the names of skating parties and societies (Skaatzen rijders), and huge barrel organs operated in booths, by machinery, are blaring forth discordant sounds.

Little by little we leave all this bustle and noise and glide smoothly along the ice to the music of the string of bells on the collar of the old brown horse. In less than an hour we reach a dark patch of ice, and my driver, pointing ahead, says: "So, I was afraid of it," and sure enough there was an open space in the ice, stretching to the right and left, and effectually barring our pathway. A skater drew near, and he and the driver held an excited conversation together. I gathered that we could not get over to Marken in the sleigh, but must secure a boat and be rowed there. We were still a good five miles away from the island, so there was nothing to do but go back to Monnickendam or to Vol-

endam, a short distance up the coast. I chose the latter, well knowing the hospitable reception I should receive from Mynheer Spaander in his comfortable hostelry . . . that night I watched the skaters in the mellow light of innumerable torches and fires along the banks of the canal, and long after I went to bed I heard the bells, the shouts of the skaters and the thousand and one noises made by the crowds on the ice. . . .

In the morning, which dawned gray and damp, I made arrangements with two brawny fishermen to take me in a boat from a clear patch of water a mile or two farther on. This clear water, they claimed, stretched over to Marken in a winding curve, and to reach it I must go by horse sleigh to its edge. They were to drag the boat over, cutting straight across the ice, and launching it, await my coming. All of which sounded adventurous and quite exciting. It proved so, taking us the best part of the long day, during which we had to get out three times and drag out the heavy boat on the ice and pull it along to where the dark streak of water showed ahead. It all

sounds very easy when I write it here, but a harder day's work I never did before or since, and when at last we reached the solid ice and saw the masts of the boats behind the frozen snow-covered dike at Marken, where I paid the men for their services, they refusing to go further with me, I left my heavy grip on the ice and trudged up the steep dike, and there were the houses of Marken before me. Here I got a youth to go after my grip and carry it up to the house of the Heer Pastoor, who met me literally with open arms. In his little clean living room I was soon at home, and with my shoes drying at the brass fire box on his blue-tiled hearth, I gulped down prodigious quantities of hot tea, and there we smoked and talked until far into the night.

Finally we were quite talked out. The heat of the fire on the blue-tiled hearth, which had now died down to gray ash, the great quantity of hot tea which I had consumed, and the hard trip over the ice, combined to make my eyelids heavy, and noticing my halting responses to his genial queries, mine host lighted a tallow candle

in a brass stick and showed me to my bed in the small adjoining room, the same that I had occupied on my previous visit to Marken. It was built in a recess in the wall. The frame was painted a vivid green and it contained a huge feather pillow on a bolster, a downy feather mattress beneath, and to cover me was a quilted cotton affair like unto a huge pin cushion enclosed in a gorgeous covering of printed cotton with a pattern of roses as large as lettuce heads. On the floor was a strip of matting covering the dull red brick tiles, each of which measured nine inches square. One small window of four panes opposite the door was curtained with muslin. The walls were of wide pine boards painted light green, and set vertically. Three heavy beams crossed the ceiling. Two large rush bottomed chairs with slatted backs, a washstand and a huge carved cabinet completed the furnishing of this quaint bedroom. In ten minutes I had blown out the candle and was in the depths of the feathery wall-bed. . . .

When I opened my eyes, the room was in inky darkness, no light came through the thin muslin

curtain of the small window. I heard a bell ringing clamorously, and all at once realized that this was Christmas Day—the day of Sint Niklaas on Marken. I lighted the candle and dressed. On the table of the living room I found a tall, delft, three-legged teapot with a piece of candle underneath in a saucer all ready to light to heat the water, and a large bowl of cold boiled eggs. This, with the plate of rich cheese, forms the usual Marken breakfast.

On the hearth, which was cleanly swept, a hot fire of peat burned brightly in the brass fire pot. A kerosene lamp burned suspended from the ceiling. Soon I had finished my big bowl of smoking hot tea, which I qualified with the pitcher of rich, thick, yellow cream, and then I hastened toward the church, joining the throng of women and children on the dike. Many of them carried lanterns. The hands of the clock on the tower pointed to half past six precisely—"haalf seven," as the peasants say, that is, half of seven. Thus do they name the hours of Marken.

Overhead the sky was a rich dark ultramarine,

WALL BED IN WHICH I SLEPT

while at the horizon the color was steel gray. The surface of the Zuyder Zee was of a rich black velvety hue, against which the snow-covered dikes shone pallidly as far as the eye could reach. Here and there lights gleamed in the houses. All at once the Northern Lights flamed out in flickering, trembling bands and ribbons of opalescent color. Under it the snow gleamed and sparkled, and under the hurrying feet of the peasants, the snow crunched with a ringing sound that was not unmusical, but which set my teeth on edge and sent shivers down my spine. In the door frames of the houses, I saw small candle ends, some still lighted and guttering, others had blown out, a custom of Marken on Sint Niklaas, his day.

I recognized among the throng of peasants old Martje, her head wrapped in a huge plaid shawl. She stopped for a moment before the door of the baker (Broodbakker) and broke a china saucer on the step—then passed on. I asked my neighbor the reason for this, and she told me that Martje and the baker's wife had not spoken for nearly a year, and that this act of breaking the

saucer on the doorstep ended the quarrel, old Martje thereby asking forgiveness "in the sacred name of God."

Here and there before the houses poles were set up with large bunches of oats tied to them, "so that the birds of the air might feed on this blessed Christmas Day." In the east the light increased fast, and by the time we reached the church, day was dawning. The building was well filled, with women and children principally, but few men being present. There was no decoration in the church except a large gilt star over the Heer Pastoor's chair. He was preaching as we entered and his clear voice rang out resonantly. He was telling his flock a story—"And what have you done?" said St. Peter.

"Very little," said the old woman.

"I was sick and miserable. It was a hard winter; the ice lay upon the water of the Zuyder Zee as far as one could see. All the people walked upon it—there was skating and dancing—there was music and feasting. I could hear it as I lay in my bed. I looked across the icy

stretch of sea, and just where sea met sky I saw a cloud arise. I lay watching the cloud, and then I saw a black spot in the middle of it growing larger and larger, and then I knew what it meant, for I am old and experienced, and then horror crept over me. Twice before I had seen the same thing, and I knew that a terrible storm with a high tide would rise and swallow up those poor people who were drinking, dancing and singing, all so merrily. Young and old, the whole town was there; who would warn them if no one noticed the sign, or knew what it meant as I did?

"Greatly alarmed, I felt such life within me as I had not felt for many a long day. Out of bed I got and to the window. I could hardly stand for very weakness, but I managed to open my window. I saw the pretty flags waving in the wind, I heard the boys shouting and the young girls and men singing. It was merriment everywhere, but there was that terrible cloud overhead with the black center. I shouted to them as loudly as I could, but no one heard me; I was too far away. Soon the storm would burst

upon them, the ice would break up and all who were there would be lost.

"Oh, if I could only get out to them. Then all at once Heaven sent me the idea of setting light to my straw bed. Better burn the house down than so many people should perish miserably. I succeeded in striking a light and then the flames leapt up, as I dragged myself out of the door. I fell near the threshold, unable to stand. The flames darted out after me, burst the window and leapt high above the roof, which was all afire. All the people on the ice saw it and came running to the dike as fast as they could to help. No one but ran to help save a poor old woman who they thought was being burnt alive. I heard them coming, then I felt a rush of wind and a roaring sound like the firing of heavy cannon, the ice split up into pieces, the black water shined, but the people had all reached the dike where the sparks were flying upward. I had saved them all, St. Peter. But I suppose I could not stand the cold or fright, for I am here come to the gates of Heaven." Then St. Peter gave a sign, the Gates of Heaven

opened and a glorious white angel led in the old woman to everlasting glory."

Then the Heer Pastoor ceased speaking and sat down. The story was just what the people liked. I could see it in their faces. They all sang the Christmas hymns with a will and when the solemn clerk passed the silk bag on the end of the long pole before them, they gave liberally of dubbeltjs (a small silver coin).

Then the Heer Pastoor pronounced the benediction and the service was over. The bell rang merrily in the tower; out of every chimney top, even from the smallest and humblest house, the smoke rose up in streams into the clear, crisp air. The sun came up over the sea in a great splendor and on the fishing boats the red, white and blue flags streamed gayly in the fresh breezes.

Then the people sang in unison the song of Christmas joy:

"Christmas, Awake! Salute the morn
Whereon the Saviour of the world was born;
Rise to adore the mystery of love
Which hosts of angels chanted from above,
Hallelujah, Hallelujah!"

The Heer Pastoor stood on the step of the church watching his people wending their ways homeward. His face was grave as he closed the door and we walked together.

I spoke of the story he had told and his face lighted as he said, "Ah, yes, Mynheer, it is one of Hans Christian Andersen's wonderful tales; I love them all. I tell them to my people, they understand them."

On the dike, before the houses, small boys and girls, well bundled up with bright scarfs, were building snowmen or dancing merrily around them, their shouts and laughter filling the air. Troops of men comically dressed paraded arm in arm, singing, from house to house. A company of musicians played before the Koffij huis. At the bake shop, which was crowded with wide-eyed children, the "Koek bakker" set out rows of gingerbread figures of fat men and women with bright red cherries as buttons on their jackets, and black currants for eyes. Everyone who came by bought these cakes for the expectant children. Every purchaser got a present of six

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large buns covered with white sugar and dotted with raisins.

In the afternoon I was invited to an entertainment at the house of the Heer Burgomeester. When I arrived the house was filled in every part, seemingly. The young ladies and "Mevrouwe" received me with great kindness. A recital was taking place, and from the hallway I could see into the living room, with its varied treasures of brass and china. A tall, thin young man, a student in "the School at Amsterdam," it appeared, and a cousin of "Mevrouwe," was reciting a poem entitled "The Aunt's Spectacles," in which the said spectacles were described as enabling the person who wore them in an assembly to read their thoughts and to predict from them all that would happen in the coming year. The young man addressed himself in turn to those about him. "In the heart of that lady there," he said, "I find a millinery shop. In the next, all is empty—but who knows what the future may bring. Now, then, I see one in which all is genuine gold." The young girl at whom

he gazed, blushed and cast down her eyes, whereat all around laughed heartily at her confusion.

"The only fault I find," he went on, "is that it is already occupied and there is thus no room for me." At this there was loud applause. Then he continued: "The next heart I see is like a museum. It contains all the deformities of all the lady's female friends—Alas! Alas! Now I see another heart, and this is like unto a holy church, the white dove of innocence flutters over the high altar. I would gladly kneel here, but I have no time. I must pass on into the next heart; the sound of the organ is ringing in my ears, so that I feel not unworthy to enter into the sanctuary where I see a sick mother in a miserable garret room, but God's sun is shining through the window, splendid roses are blooming in a little flower box on the roof, and two bluebirds are singing of the joys of childhood, while the sick mother implores God to bless her child.

"The next I see is a butcher's stall. Wherever I turn there is nothing but meat. It is the heart of a rich man whose name you know." At this

there was an uneasy movement in the audience, but the pallid young man went on. "Now the heart of this man's wife, it is nothing but an old dilapidated pigeon house. The husband's portrait serves as a weathercock and is connected with the doors, so that they open and shut whenever he turns his head. And here is a cabinet of mirrors in the next heart which I see; it is like unto those in the Queen's Palace at 'Het Loo! But these mirrors magnify to an incredible degree. Before them sits the owner in the center of the floor admiring his own greatness."

I fancied that he looked towards the Heer Burgomeester, but I could not be sure. This ended the poem and the pallid young man sat down, wiped his forehead with a rather soiled handkerchief, and then spat into it, while all the company applauded long and loudly. Refreshments were served by buxom, bare-armed maids in wonderful costumes. "Appel Kockjes" and "Haalp-en-haalp," and a particularly sweet sort of champagne which well-nigh upset me, but which I dare not refuse because "Mevrouwe" was watching every movement. There was a great

deal of singing of folk songs, some of which I tried to memorize, with little success, however, and then with hearty good wishes for the coming year, and much handshaking on the part of all the elders, and giggling among the girls and young men, the gathering broke up, and I went back to the little house of the Heer Pastoor, a comfortable fire, pipes and tobacco, and his frugal but hearty hospitality.

The Koffij Huis

ALTHOUGH Marken cannot boast of a regular inn, it has its favorite coffee house (Koffij huis, they spell it). The stranger would not readily find it, because it bears no distinguishing sign, and its door and windows resemble those of its neighbors, but the observant eye sees no row of "Klompen" beside the entrance, and this fact denotes its character. Entering, one steps into a long, low, rather bare room with a well sanded floor. Around the three sides is a continuous bench before which are small bare tables. There is a raised fireplace, over which is a mantel, hooded with a bright red calico narrow curtain on a string. The mantel is narrow,

too, and holds a motley collection of brass things and a half dozen beautiful old delft plates of blue and violet tones. The walls of this room are rudely paneled in wood painted a dark reddish brown. On the walls are quaint racks of pipes dispersed among a great quantity of mugs and platters. At the farther end, facing the entrance, is a sort of bar, behind which sits "Mevrouwe" placidly knitting, with an eye open to the needs of her customers. "Mevrouwe" sees all that passes, but rarely has a word to say. She nods graciously to whosoever enters her domain, but of speech she is chary.

The Burgomeester introduced me on this occasion to the hospitality of the Koffij huis, and when we had seated ourselves on one of the benches where we could see whoever entered, and Katij had served us with tobacco and small glasses of "half en half" curaçao and orange bitters, I noted a hanging board over "Mevrouwe's" head, on which were the words "Ongelukken Komen nooit alleen" (Misfortunes never come singly); "Niet gereken buiten den waard" (Do not reckon without your host). The Burgomees-

ter followed my glance and smiled as he said, "Is it not true, Mynheer, and is it not good advice?"

The men began to arrive by twos and threes, and Katij bustled in and out serving coffee from a long-handled brass pot that shone like gold. My presence attracted little attention, but all greeted the Burgomeester civilly, some of them nodding to me, the stranger within their gates.

Reversing the natural order of things, the community of Marken may be described as convenient to the Koffij huis, which is to impute to it a relative importance not greater than its due; for the Koffij huis standing somewhat aloof from the "dorf" on the dike, at once sequestered, yet conspicuous, is the true center of local interest, and the instituted exchange of news and gossip. Marken has no daily paper—and needs none, indeed.

A proverb on the island reads, "What is the news of the day to the frog in the well?" Nevertheless, when news stirs the air on Marken, all footsteps hasten to the Koffij huis and there it is discussed placidly, not to say phlegmatically.

Marken is outwardly the ideal scene-shifter's

village, all gables and properties, but really it is as utilitarian as one could wish. Events here move much as they do in more prosaic and commonplace villages, although the wondering tourist finds this hard to credit, but the muse does not hover over Marken to celebrate these picturesque aspects. Old Niklaas sitting in his corner, puffing on his clay pipe black with age, and cogitating upon the illusions of life, and the inscrutable purpose involved in the creation of the flies which annoy him, is typical of Marken life. Small things assume great importance here, and I find that I, too, have lost sight of the things of the great outside world, and am busied with the matters considered by my neighbors, such as the quality of the water due to the drouth; the probability of the new tax on the fishing boats; questions which are now agitating the people.

I find that this is a festal night here in the Koffij huis. It is the birthday celebration of old Dirk Torp, proprietor of the establishment and husband of the placid vrouwe who sits knitting behind the bar. Old Dirk is a typical Markenite; burly, sleepy looking, and good humored.

OSSIPS

It is his custom on his birth-night to receive the congratulations of his friends in the Koffij huis. Scrubbed and garnished anew with sheen of copper and brass and the pageantry of blue china, the burnished kettles and pots make a brave splendor on the walls and shelves; open cupboards display to-night their blue and white ceramic treasures; the great smoke-jack is brightly polished against the plum-colored tiles; the large green Zealand clock, with its carved, opulent mermaids and brass weights, ticks solemnly with importance. The smoke-colored rafters overhead display lines of alluring hams and sausage, and on a long table in the center of the room, scoured with sand by the enthusiastic, tireless arms of Katij, the platters of veal and mutton and the savor of rabbit stewed with onions, promise something out of the ordinary.

Old Dirk Torp bids everyone to drink his health, Katij flies hither and yon with double handfuls of stone mugs brimming with a thin sour beer, pipes glow and tobacco smoke arises in clouds, the room fills up rapidly, the company coming early and well-nigh altogether.

Although clumsy boors at best, these men have at least stumbled upon good manners scorned by their lagging betters,—they are prompt. Each man in his Sunday best, clean shaven, solemn, removed his hat and hung it upon one of the rows of pegs as he entered, and straightway applied himself with great singleness of mind to the task of reducing the huge platters of meat and vegetables to nothingness; of course, what else were they come for but to do honor to old Dirk's table? They fed standing. Custom had demonstrated that the greatest capacity for the proper stowage of victuals is afforded by an attitude of perpendicularity, and this coupled with a certain deliberation accomplishes wonders in the way of "honoring the board."

One by one the guests wiped their mouths with the backs of their hands, heaved a deep sigh of satisfied repletion, and each taking his refilled mug returned to his chosen place against the wall, where "girding up his mind" he braced himself for what was to come. Now Mynheer, the Burgomeester, whose ruddy face shone as if freshly buttered, took the floor by right of his po-

sition in the community, and proposed the time-honored toast, which was received by all with solemn satisfaction, and the banging of mugs on the tables:

"God above, ruler of all,
Kings and monks and beggars and us,
Swimming ships in the stormy sea,
The earth, and all that in it is,
Swine and cattle, and old oak tree.
Old Dirk Torp, I drink to thee.
Health and wealth I wish to thee,
And I hope thy soul in Heaven may dwell
With the final stroke of passing bell."

I have translated this toast very lamely, I know, but this is the sense of it. Then the Burgomeester hid the buttery shininess of the inner disk of his ruddy cheeks in his mug and drank a long deep draught, to the approving clatter of the mugs on the tables. Chorus by the assembled company:

"And I hope thy soul," etc., etc.

"A fine and good toast," said the short cobbler on my right, emphatically banging his mug on the table.

"True, Piet," said the dike warden. "It has a ring to it."

"There was a soldier on shore to-day," said my neighbor on the left, apropos of nothing whatever. "He came over on the *Geertje* (the packet) and he talked much; had money in his 'zak,' too; yes, counting his legs he was only one man, but as to his tongue!—You'd a thought 'twere a company o' the line with a brass band following, and the Prince of Orange at the head o't. Talk!"

"And where did he go?" said the Burgomeester.

"He supped with 'Boreeltje,' (toddy) and went on the last boat for Amsterdam." This was greeted with uproarious laughter by all within hearing, evidently a local joke at the expense of Boreeltje, who sat at the side of the fireplace and grinned sheepishly.

A round of applause followed the invitation of old Niklaas to the schoolmaster to favor the company with a song. Up got that colorless person and responded with a plaintive recital of his adventures in the "Garden of Cupid." It

transpired that eve, he had been two minutes in that garden, he saw a pretty maiden sitting in an arbor, who received his addresses with a timidity which so emboldened him that he carried her away without hindrance to "his own very house," where and when, to his consternation and amazement, she vowed that she'd ever live a virgin and "orange blossoms wear." The schoolmaster gave such an imitation of reality to the virgin's statements that, though the assembled listeners had evidently heard it many times before, they pounded the tables with their mugs at its finish, to show their compassion, and he sat down flushed with pleasure. Then the Burgomeester turned to me and with a wave of his hand, introduced the stranger within their gates.

"Mynheer," he said, "has come to us from far-off America, from the great New York. Mynheer is, as you all know, 'een Schilderer'—that is, 'een Tekenmeester,' and although we have not hitherto liked such strangers on Marken, Mynheer has brought to us such letters from Amsterdam to our Heer Pastoor, and to myself, that we have received Mynheer, the 'Schilderer' as our

friend, and we hope that he will stop long with us and that he will find here on Marken all that he seeks. And now, on this occasion of the celebration of the birthday of our good friend, Dirk Torp, I think that we would be glad to hear from Mynheer the 'Schilderer' from America, something concerning that great and wonderful city of New York."

Then I told them of the Statue of Liberty in the Harbor, of its height, of the torch it holds aloft, and of the staircase inside. I told them of the great steamships that enter the harbor daily, of the tonnage of the great ship *Olympic*, of the number of people accommodated on board, of the tall buildings on Broadway, of the express elevators, and their speed. I told them of the elevated railways, of the subways beneath the city, of the tunnels beneath the rivers and the cars rushing through them laden with thousands of people, and much besides which need not here be chronicled.

The Markenites listened with stupefaction to the wonders as I unfolded them, which so encouraged me that I embroidered the narrative

freely. I told them of the steam presses printing the great Sunday newspapers, and the enterprise of the proprietors in spreading these broadcast over the country. I told them of Burbank and his wonderful feats of wizardry with fruit and vegetables, of DeForest and Marconi, and his wireless telegraphy by means of which ships hundreds of miles apart on the sea communicated with each other with ease and certainty; of the distances between some of the cities of the United States (which they knew as the "Vereenige Staaten"), that San Francisco was a week distant by fast train from New York; and much more that I leave to the imagination of the reader of this chronicle. The stolid Mynheers kept me busy thus until after nine o'clock, and even then some of them were for keeping me relating the wonders of the great Metropolis until "Mevrouwe," who had been placidly knitting throughout the narrative, her shrewd twinkling old eyes fixed upon me at times doubtingly, now got up from her chair, fixed her needles in the big soft blue ball of wool, and smoothing out her apron, pointed to the clock significantly. The

cobbler awoke from the stupor into which my wonder tales had plunged him, and stepping to the door, opened it and spat over the sill. "I'll tell you one thing, and that's not two, we'd better be stepping home if we've had enough. The sky's clouding over again like as if the storm might be planning to give us another drenching. There's a moon-dog over yonder against that black cloud and the light burns dim on the jetty; there's no surer sign of rain." Darkly piled-up masses of cloud hovered and drifted overhead, spreading deep purple shadows over the sea, gloom folded on gloom, ready to league with the blackness of the night. And just as we turned down the dike towards the house of the Heer Pastoor whose guest I was, the moon now dropped far down towards the horizon, found a little round hole in a grim black wall, and through it flashed up obliquely a long bit of lambent silvery light shining sheer across the sky. It set the rain drops a twinkling and shimmered in the still, dark, sluggish water of the canal by the dike. We heard the voice of the cobbler now farther down the dike observing, "It looks bad

for the weather when the moon makes a chimney in the sky like that; we'll have a wet night." Another voice replying, "I doubt we're not yet done with the thunder."

Some Characteristics

THE Marken people are intensely jealous of the Volendammers, whom they hate more than any of the other villagers on the mainland. They call all of the people on the shore "foreigners" and sniff contemptuously when one speaks of Broek, or Edam, and as for Purmerend, those Purmerenders are quite beyond them; they really are unable to express their feelings. Mention of Alkmaar and its cheese market, or any of the coast towns, will cause them to regard you with suspicion, from which you will long suffer their displeasure. So that it is best to weigh well your words and the subject of your conversation on the island, if you value your comfort. In

HE PATROON

all these matters I was fortunately guided by my good friend, Jan Appel. The skipper of the *Vrouwe Geertje*, too, cautioned me as to my conduct when he learned that I contemplated a stay of several weeks upon Marken.

The sail over the shallow waters of the Gouwzee in the *Vrouwe Geertje* is interesting and picturesque. The boat is a typical fishing craft, clumsy in shape, shining with varnish and strips of scoured brass. It has excellent sailing qualities, and when the huge oaken "lee boards" at each side are dropped, she can sail up into the eye of the wind in a remarkable manner. The sail takes about an hour when the wind is fair, but the skipper tells me that in the winter when the Gouwzee is frozen over, the distance between Monninkendam and the island has been covered in "four minutes" on skates! If I disbelieved this statement of his, I took good care not to show it, as he watched me narrowly to see how I took it. Then he said, "Those Volendammers will tell you that it takes 'twintj' minutes, but they are liars—those Volendammers." The sail is a somewhat melancholy one, the water is a

greenish yellow, with pallid streaks in it. At the horizon it is a dull blue. There is generally a mist when it is windy, and the sky is gray. In sunny weather there are vast piled-up white clouds of great beauty in the sky, and the shadows go chasing each other across the stretch of water, alternating with bursts of brilliant sunshine which light up the ruddy colored sails, presenting unique marine pictures of great beauty. Large flocks of aquatic birds fly over the shallow waters, screaming over morsels of fish floating on the surface, and these the people never molest, "it would bring ill fortune," says the Patroon.

I asked him if the story of the mermaid told on the shore was true, and he became vehement in his denial, attacking the Volendammers anew with vituperation and a surprising richness of expletives. "Nothing but a seal," he said, an ordinary seal which had come through the passage between Hoorn and Stavoren, and thus entered the Zuyder Zee.

"And what became of it?" I asked to stimulate him anew.

"Died, of course," he rejoined laconically, and then spat overboard.

"And is it true that Stavoren harbor was filled up by the dumping of a cargo of wheat from Dantzig, and that the famous Vrouwenzand bar was thus formed?" I asked.

"Not so, Mynheer, no truth in it whatever, all a pack of Volendam lies!" Thus did the Patroon of *De Vrouwe Geertje* dispose of two of the pet traditions of the Zuyder Zee.

I pretended to believe him for peace' sake, and he at length recovering from his choler against the Volendammers, became very loquacious and even friendly, instructing me in the mysteries of the Marken dialect which presents untold difficulties to the foreigner, for even the Hollander himself can scarcely understand some of the islanders' conversation. Read this, as an example, and judge how difficult is the dialect.

"Ja, en de andere' verlangde toe niet verder een proefje van hunne behendigheid af te legge!" (That is, "None are here anxious to try their skill, in conversation") and the pronunciation is indescribable in print. Thus he in-

structed me most patiently and with great gravity, repeating over and over again the sentence until I mastered the "behendigheid" with all its mysterious gutturals and aspirates. Then he proceeded to teach me a fine old song:

"Heb je can de Zilveren Vloot wel gehoord,
De Zilveren Vloot van Spanje?
Die had we veel spaansche matten aan boord
En appeltjes van Oranje!
Piet Hein, (three times)
Zijn naam is klein,
Zijn daden bennen grott." (Twice.)

Which, when I had mastered the gutturals, he insisted, that I recite to him with all possible rapidity. I discovered later that his apparent interest in me was really due to his interest in my knife, of a Swedish "barrel" pattern, and this he asked me for quite calmly and with a matter-of-course air, as if he was sure that I would not refuse him. He examined it critically, saying, "I make no doubt it is of good stuff," and calmly put it in his pocket. But he did, I must admit, transfer part of his regard for the knife to its former owner. If there is anything that a Marken skipper loves better than his pipe it is a

good knife. Indeed on Marken there is an old saying, "There is good in him whoso values iron," and my expectations as to the Patroon were realized on further acquaintance. He told me that really he was a Frieslander born, but a Markenite in thought and feeling. With this confidence he lapsed into silence for some minutes as if repenting his confidence in me, but upon feeling my knife in his pocket, he favored me again and seemed to care that I should see everything transpiring of interest to a stranger and a landsman. Without looking in the direction he would suddenly say, "There's a school of herring playing over to windward," or, "Those streaky clouds to leeward foretell a change in the wind." Steering the old brown-sailed *Tjalk* in seeming abstraction, nothing really escaped his eye. How he saw all I could not quite make out, but see all and everything he did. He told me a good story, too. Over on Marken there was a house with a haunted room. Years and years ago an old Patroon, who had a sick wife, lived there. He was a hard drinker and she had a hard and ready tongue, so between them there was

trouble. It happened that the Patroon was fond of a good dinner and of the company of his cronies, and once a month or so, at any rate too frequently for the patience of the "Goed Vrouwe," they foregathered for carousing. She complained and berated him so that at length he built out a small room on piling at the back of the house, wherein he held his carouses. "All at once" (here he spat overboard, was reflective for a moment, then began again) "All at once, Mynheer, it began."

"What began?" I asked.

"Die eene doet allerlei kunstjes" (that one which plays tricks), he said mysteriously. "There came a great noise of breaking china, and a loud banging, and when the Patroon rushed out into the room he saw the soup, the roast, the bread and the drink all in a mess on the floor and the table upset, lying on its side. The window was open, too, on the dike. The Patroon went upstairs to where his wife lay on her bed, and there was loud talking, so they say. But soon the Patroon returned and the table was set anew and another dinner was cooked while the Patroon

and his cronies sat outside, smoking on the bench. When, just as all was again ready, and the "wench" was about to call them into the inner room, again came the crash of china and the banging of furniture thrown about—"

"You mean that the dinner was again destroyed?" I asked.

"Yes, Mynheer, again and yet again, until the Patroon was at length forced to go to the 'tapperij' (inn) and drink and carouse there with his cronies."

"And then?" I asked.

"Then the Patroon took her away with him on a voyage in a lumber ship to Norway, and when he came back to Marken he was a changed man. He told everybody that his "Vrouwe" had died in Norway and was buried there. But he did not wear the mourning for her very long. Soon he invited the old skippers to his house for dinner, and the table was again set in the small room with the window opening on the dike at the rear. A huge dinner was cooked. There was bacon and greens, and stuffed fowl, a blood pudding with cinnamon dressing, and a 'haalf Jan'

of French brandy, 'Wat spijt het mij' " (How sorry I am that I was not there), he added reflectively.

"And then?" I urged.

"Then, once more came the noise of breaking china, and all rushing into the room they beheld the table upset and the dinner all in a mess on the floor. Ja, Mynheer, everything destroyed! The bacon and the greens, the stuffed fowl, the blood pudding with cinnamon dressing, and the 'Haalf Jan' of French brandy all smashed up on the floor, and the table lying on its side against the wall. All looked at the Patroon standing there with expressionless face, but they noted the trembling of his huge hairy hands—"

"And what became of him, is he still living on Marken?"

"Neen, Mynheer," he rejoined. "He went to foreign parts I think; Edam, I believe, and died there." (Note. Edam is on the mainland, only a dozen or so miles away.)

"So, Mynheer, 'Verwonder u niet' (do not be surprised) at anything you see or hear on Marken."

And that is all I ever heard of the story. I used to go out fishing with him in the *Tjalk* in all sorts of weather. Sometimes even away over towards the coast of Scotland. He was as impervious to cold as a polar bear, and when the wind blew a cold gale from the northeast, he would turn out in a thin cotton shirt, his furzy brown chest bare, and no stockings. At other times when the sun shone brassy on the sea, and I was stifled with the heat, out he would come in a heavy pea-jacket, and sit smoking his short clay pipe with a humorous eye cast on me.

Somehow he thinks me a humorist, and if I ask him to hand me the bread across the table, he detects therein a hidden joke and laughs shyly. At such times he wrinkles his forehead in a curious manner, inscrutable at first, but easy to read once you have the key.

He loves to hear the same story or joke over and over again, and laughs at precise points of the compass, just as he would lay out a course for his *Tjalk*, any variation being abhorrent to him. He likes to correct me when I tell the story differently (as I occasionally do for my own

amusement). Sometimes I have stolen a march upon him, and then he acts like a damp firecracker, going off into a sort of compromised explosion, sputtering and gurgling down into a deep mumbling noise between his broad shoulders, like the "rote" of the sea afar. But he is ever ready for you to touch him off again and yet again, once you have him magnetized and word perfect with your story. This established, one story will last a whole week, coming up regularly at meal time in the small clean cabin of the *Tjalk*, with the prismatic sun spot from the glass skylight overhead chasing back and forth across the orange oilclothed table hinged to the wall.

So it was that I got acquainted with the Patroon, Jan Appel, on the way across the Gouwzee to Marken, in the *Vrouwe Geertje*.

BOY AND GIRL

The "Joen Liezl"

ON Marken every young man has a fair chance with the fair sex. If there is no coming out as a ceremony for the young Marken girl, she emerges from no cloistered seclusion, and the training of the Dutch boy is such as to make him well able to hold his own. Dutch chaperons are very human, and have a friendly eye—a blind one for the young people—and occasions are plentiful on Marken for their meetings. Of course the formalities before and after marriage are strange and very different from ours, and some of them are very elaborate and unique. Until the son and daughter reach the age of thirty, the consent of the father is

necessary before marriage may be contracted by either party. Likewise his consent is sought for an engagement.

On Marken, then, where everyone knows everyone, there is no necessity for an inquisition into the financial standing of the aspirant, as elsewhere in the country, but his tendencies and performances in the past are under scrutiny,—"Has he frequented the 'Tapperij'? Is he adept at the fishing?" These facts settled, then only personal likings are considered. Long engagements are not discouraged; on the contrary. The question of dowry never comes up. Dowries do not obtain on Marken, as all the children share equally in whatever fortune the family may have. So these matters being disposed of, the young couple send out elaborately lithographed cards ornamented with red hearts, white doves, and wreaths of red roses, thus announcing their passion and their decision, after which they promenade publicly arm in arm, or hand in hand, on the dike. Before engagement a scandal would ensue if a girl promenaded with a young man. Girls may not do more than ac-

knowledge a bow or word from a male acquaintance on the street. Yet in the winter on the ice, convention is relaxed enough to permit a youth and maid to skate together, when otherwise they may not walk in company.

There is no word that I know in the Dutch language signifying courtship. On Marken it is very conspicuous to put it mildly, but Mevrouwe Teerhuis says that there are rules and conventions which are rigidly enforced. It may be, and indeed is assumed, that these two hearts beat fondly and solely for each other, so opportunities are furnished for them to hold hands to their hearts' content, and most frankly before all men and women. They are invited together to the entertainments and they may promenade and dance together as much as they wish. It is considered a great breach of etiquette to invite one without the other. Then after a week or a month of these invitations, custom varies with the individuals, comes the ceremony of "Joen piezl" by which a young man and his affianced must go through the ordeal of sitting up throughout the whole night with a long guttering

lighted candle on the table between them. The ceremony is a solitary one as the parents shut up the house and retire for the night, leaving the couple stolidly sitting each in a stiff-backed chair on either side of the round table. They are not to speak until the candle has burnt down and gone out, leaving them in darkness, the assumption being that they must indeed be very much in love or they could not endure the night's vigil. In the morning, in the presence of the whole family, and certain close friends maybe, the couple are considered engaged for good and all, the young man is welcomed as one of the family, the respective parents drink boiled wine together, and thenceforward until the day of the wedding the couple do pretty much as they please.

The Queen's Birthday

THE brick-paved street is bisected by innumerable small "steegs" or alleys and flanked by strange dark gabled houses of tarred wood. For a week past the people have been preparing for the annual fête. Some large vans loaded on flat boats have been brought from the mainland amid great excitement, for such a thing as a real "Kermis" has never before, I am told, happened on Marken. Sheds and booths are being erected and a tawdry merry-go-round put together by swarthy ill-looking men. The children are spellbound and breathless with excitement, as the draperies of painted canvas much ornamented with heavy scarlet fringe and pieces

of mirror, which flash alluringly in the sun, are put in place. Household duties are well-nigh forgotten and groups of the heavy-featured women gaze in stolid wonder at the merchants arranging their stalls with stocks of medals, rings, trinkets and cheap charms which later on will sparkle in the flaring light of lamps or smoking naphtha torches. They fairly ache to handle and finger the bright objects so full of color and allurement. Marken loves color and uses it lavishly, too. The streets have been swept down and washed so that the bricks are immaculately clean. Doorsteps have been scrubbed and newly washed muslin curtains are at the windows in which bright flowers bloom. To-night the pent up enthusiasm will run wild. A huge steam organ has been rehearsing the whole afternoon. Something is wrong with its mechanism and occasionally raucous blasts of a few discordant notes are borne far upon the light breeze. This is Saturday and the fishing boats are beginning to arrive in port from the fishing grounds and from Amsterdam where their "fare" has been delivered. As fast as the boats are moored at the

jetty of the inner harbor and all made shipshape, the men and half-grown boys in their strange attire join the throng watching the preparations. At the end of the roadway below the church, a cinematograph has been installed in a discolored tent hung with bunting, and a large sign on its front proclaims it to be "Cinnema-American," Admission "1 dubbeltje." The engine which furnishes the power is set up on a platform outside—a thing of brass, nickle and crimson paint. A row of boys and girls are sitting entranced before its flashing splendors, dumb with wonder, watching every movement of the man who is cleaning up. The afternoon sun is casting long blue tender shadows across the green and golden meadows and the dull red and black roofs of the villages—giving lovely tones to the purple blacks and the grays of the walls and the brown velvety sails of the fishing boats at the dike end . . . voices and the noise of hammering fills the air . . . the red sun sets across the flashing water of the Zuyder Zee . . . a bell rings and then all at once "Tee-dree-tra-a-a-a-Zing! Boom tar-ra-a-dee!" the organ has opened the fête.

The raucous strident racket dominates, and the air is split with its noise. Electric lights flash out over the merry-go-round and the whole thing seems to revolve before the eyes of the amazed peasants, who long, yet hesitate, to mount the gayly painted horses, griffons, lions and tigers which flash past them. In vain do the swarthy "barkers" invite them to come in and spend their "dubbeltjes." They are willingly drawn to it but—to spend money, Ah! there's the rub. The place is filled almost to suffocation, everybody is in full dress, and such silk hats and jackets as are worn by the men and older boys beggar description. The women are in stiff brocaded petticoats and their helmets are more ornate than ever, crowning costumes of incredible gorgeousness. Unhappy they look, but they are not so. They do not smile when they speak to each other, and the girls are so very conscious of their hands —such large red hands they are, too, so they either hide them behind their backs or standing in groups hold on to each other as if they feared something, one knows not what. The young men are clad in tightly fitting jackets which are

most absurdly shortwaisted, which seem to embarrass their movements, and their tanned necks are choked by tightly wound stiff stocks of magenta colored stuff, gold buttoned. But they are brave and really would choke rather than not be in style. The occasion demands it of them.

The girls who yesterday were working in the hay meadows under the hot sun are now arrayed in their best Sunday costumes with ribbons streaming behind them. Their attempts at finery are better done than those of the boys, notwithstanding the restless red hands which so trouble them. The folk attempt a certain sort of dignity at the start but they cannot long stand the strain, and soon a few drinks of "Genever" (gin) puts them at greater ease and inspires such confidence as allows them to forget themselves somewhat. They in turn then transmit this to others and soon Marken begins to enjoy itself. Some of the children have been given a free ride by the wily proprietor of the merry-go-round, and under the flashing, sputtering electric lights, they swing mounted on the terrible

wooden animals, screaming with joy. Now a man mounts a high step and bawls out hoarsely, "Als't u beleift! Als't u beleift!"—"Twaalf mal voor een duffeltje"—"Dat is de Prijs voor twaalf mal!" "De Leeuw' voor de Jongen—De hoek plaats voor de oude!"—and so on, and so on, while the peasants eye him hesitatingly, jingling coin in their capacious pockets.

But little by little his arguments and the allurements of the merry-go-round prevail, and ere long by twos and threes they mount the wooden beasts, and then the machinery begins to move, the organ blares again, and away they go in a paroxysm of fearful joy with staring eyes, and hands spasmodically grasping at every available protection. The two available tunes of the organ are so rapidly repeated that they crash and run together in a succession of whistles, groans and roars interspersed with the incessant banging of a drum with a loose head, and the crash of large cymbals both operated by the mechanism, until the air is filled with the din and one's head buzzes.

The rival attractions each endeavor to drown

the other's noise—for noise means success. The booths are thronged, toys are bought for the children, for everything must be and is cheap and gaudy,—dolls for the girls, and cakes and trumpets for the boys are arranged tier upon tier and dazzle the eyes by their gorgeousness. Marken has unloosed its tight-stringed money bags for the nonce, and is spending some of the coin gotten from the welcome, but hated, tourist, and the "Jongen" are reaping a harvest of delight and joy. Here the wheel of fortune whirls to the deep excited breathing of the throng three deep around it. Cheap watches, chains and charms are heaped up in a box beside it as prizes. The operator shows a 20 gulden note as the capital prize—but no one so far has won it. During the play the peasants see one man apparently win a watch—but they are skeptical. The winner, although in costume, was plainly a stranger and unknown to them. Such methods would not do on Marken and the men told the dealer so in few words. Thereafter his booth was wellnigh deserted. The men of Marken are shrewd! There are some Jews among the merchants who

so successfully wheedle the passer-by, being the more ready of tongue than the others. The peasants dearly love an argument between buyer and seller and seem never to tire of listening, so this is one of the means used to attract their attention, a confederate being employed as decoy and they laugh and applaud, now one, now the other. Many surround the stall where the game of Portkantoor is in operation, a sort of primitive roulette very popular among the peasantry, or opposite where the people are exercising their skill shooting at the Turk's head, "De Swaarthoofd." To gain a passage through the crowded, narrow street is by no means easy, for a Dutchman during his leisure hour is as immovable as a rock. Only by a very free use of elbows is one able to pass. At the Koffij huis down the street the glow from the open door and windows is welcoming. The interior is filled with noisy men drinking Genever (gin) and smoking the strong tobacco affected by the Marken men. At a long table at one side some Volendam men are eating supper. I know them by their rough astrachan-like woolen caps which they have not removed.

INTERIOR

The atmosphere is so heated and malodorous that one can not stand it long, but the peasant does not mind it in the least, indeed he rather enjoys it. I remember rainy days on the island when the furious gusts of wind rendered walking out of doors well-nigh impossible, and I was forced to remain indoors the livelong day, in an atmosphere the quality of which would not, I fancy, be credited were I to qualify it herein, and I remember how I was forced to adopt the use of Marken tobacco as a sort of disinfectant. All tobacco is, of course, good to the smoker, but some tobacco is certainly better than any Marken tobacco.

Walking among the crowds of people came the Heer Pastoor clad in decent black clothes and tall rusty napped silk hat, his hands clasped behind his bent back, his eyes roving from group to group, gravely smiling and nodding to the salutes of his people, his one care and sorrow the heedlessness of the men and boys of his flock.

Marken is changing with the increasing visits of the tourist, and while these do contribute very largely to the prosperity of the settlement, still

the men do not now seem so well content with the old manners and customs, and on Sundays the little bare, dismal, whitewashed church shows increasingly empty benches on the men's side, and the black contribution bag passed on the end of a long pole is often alarmingly empty. Not that his sermons are the less eloquent, or his pictures of the eternal punishment awaiting the transgressor less vivid, but the spirit of worldliness is fast undermining the structure which he has been at such pains to rear, and the old men and the boys are less amenable to his teachings. So on this night his heart seems heavy within him, and he passes on down the crowded noisy way to his house on the dike, where until long after the policeman had given the signal to close the fête and put out the sizzling naphtha lights, I saw his kerosene lamp burning in the window of his little study.

There is much eating and drinking by the people, of course, and everywhere about are booths presided over by shrewd-looking, bare-armed vrouwes frying "Ollij-Koekjes"—something like our crullers—and "Poffertjes" and "Waffeln,"

the latter baked between waffle irons, stamped with heart and diamond patterns. These are in great demand, and when besprinkled with fine powdered sugar, are eagerly eaten by the men and women. The odor of the grease they use in cooking is nauseating, but the peasants apparently do not think so. Small stands are placed here and there among the crowds, each with some sort of chance game,—"A cent a chance, come, come good people and try your luck," the dealers cry, with various uncouth pleasantries at the expense of the onlookers, and this is greatly enjoyed by the peasants. Whir go the balls and down drops a number—and the lucky player receives a more or less "valuable" gift to the applause and envy of the onlookers. This is a great and stirring day for Marken. Round and round whirls the gorgeous tinsel-bedecked merry-go-round, bearing its noisy, happy, boisterous throng of riders, while the solemn-looking engineer, sweating furiously, peeps over the red flannel curtain hiding the machinery and wipes his face. Crack! Crack! go the small Flobert rifles in the shooting booths, and clay pigeons revolve

before the targets, while the crowd pushes and jostles the marksmen, who, gingerly holding the rifle hardly four feet from the target, bang away at the objects of their choice, rarely hitting them, be it said.

Peddlers call out their wares lustily and the pin-wheel man elbows his way about, bearing above his head a large straw frame stuck full of bright paper roses and pin-wheels.

I notice a little comedy at one side, where several men have won a lot of chinaware at a game of chance, at which they have evidently spent a lot of their hard-earned "gulden." Their wives, soundly berating them, are trying to drag them away, but with their arms full of useless cups and bowls they will try for more. The wives appeal to the Burgomeester, who is passing, and he induces the men to pass on, to the manifest relief of their wives. I can imagine the reception they will get when these Amazons get their consorts behind the stout doors of their several houses. The Marken woman is prone to "fuss" at the slightest opportunity, but now! here is a chance for true eloquence. Cups and bowls, in-

deed! 'Tis like bringing coals to Newcastle, so stocked are these houses with rare crockery.

I thought I heard a phonograph at one of the booths playing, and sure enough when I reached it I recognized the jerky strains of a version in Dutch of "A Hot Time in the Old Town To-night," to which the peasants listened with blank stupid wonder, then, as it continues, it gradually has an effect upon them, and the jerky notes of the rollicking air stimulate them to join in, and laughs, and discordant voices, break in. One of the fishermen tells the others that he has heard it already in Amsterdam, "many times." At midnight the police warn the proprietor of the organ to cease playing, curtains are let down over the merry-go-round, the booth fronts are closed, and the people begin to disperse. Away from the larger island, one sees the glare of the naphtha lights against the sky, illuminating the church tower and the gilded vane on its top. The lights are reflected in the black waters of the canals, and there comes a clattering of "Klompen" from afar. A dog barks somewhere and is answered by others. One by one the lights go

out, until only that in the study of the Heer Pastoor and the ruddy beam of the lantern in the lighthouse remain. A door slams somewhere in the darkness and then silence steals over Marken. The Queen's Birthday is over. God save her Majesty!

The Story-teller

MANY times during my stay on the island I had overheard allusions to the story-teller, and I had each time adroitly endeavored to find out just when and where I might hear him, but instantly the topic of conversation would be changed and my tentative inquiries parried skillfully. It is necessary with the peasants that one should not ask direct questions of them; they are so suspicious by nature that one must approach them in a roundabout manner, and thus only may one learn of that which is hidden from the ken of the stranger. I discovered by a chance remark dropped by Marretje Teerhuis, who indeed seems to know everything that pertained to the

community, past and present, that the story-teller lived over on the "Tweede dorp" beyond the "polder" or sunken meadow, and then the rest was easy. By means of an influence over my quondam friend, Jan Appel, I induced him to consent to introduce me at one of the séances, but this was achieved only after most difficult and protracted effort upon my part. Suffice it that on one very windy night, he conducted me to one of the large houses on the edge of the settlement, a house the ample roof of which covered several habitations under which the water lapped dismally in the darkness. Evidently we were expected, for at a soft tap from my conductor, the door was opened and we were admitted into a small room furnished in the ordinary Marken fashion. A kerosene lamp of glass in a hanging frame over a round table, and a small peat fire on the hearth were the two objects that attracted my attention, for the room was very close, unusually so, even for Marken, where a current of air is abhorred at night. On the wall a very old clock with a painted dial and brass weights ticked loudly. The woman who had admitted us re-

garded us fixedly. Jan addressed her as Friesje, but I could not catch what they said.

She had a thick waist, and her bodice was of brown calico with large red spots, fastened so tightly across her ample bosom that it seemed in danger of bursting at the slightest exertion. She wore on her head a plaited round cap, beneath which her waxen face with its double chin seemed whiter than it really was. She held the corner of her apron with a large plump hand and addressed vehement remonstrances to Jan.

"It must not happen again," she said. "You must not do this. You invite this stranger without asking me first—why did you bring him? There may be trouble. Now then, take him above and then I'll see." She motioned to the ladder which stood at the side of the small room, its top vanishing in an open trapdoor in the ceiling. Jan motioned me to go up before him; as I did so, the woman left the room by the door through which we had entered. Jan followed me up the ladder, and at the top took me by the arm and struck a match. The light feebly revealed a large, dark, pent space. Overhead I

saw the rough beams and the ridge pole propped up by upright stout timbers. There was a bed of iron painted yellow, partly hidden by a calico curtain. On the uneven board floor was a narrow strip of threadbare carpet. Three chairs and a chest of drawers on which was a china basin and a lamp completed the furnishing of this sinister-looking loft.

Jan lighted the lamp and as he turned toward me, I saw on the top of the bureau a woman's long wrinkled kid glove, looking as if it had but recently been flung there by its wearer. Following my glance, Jan saw the glove, and pulling open one of the drawers of the chest, into which he hastily thrust it, he turned to me and said, "Make no noise, Mynheer—sit here until I return—only a moment." Then he disappeared down the ladder—I heard the door close below—then silence.

An excitement gripped me. What sort of an adventure was I to have? I tiptoed softly to one of the rush-bottomed chairs and sat down. Its creaking startled me. Something like fear—nameless—I don't know what, seized upon me—

gripped me with a sort of terror. I was alone in this dismal, silent house, late at night. I had not told the Heer Pastoor where I was going, and I was sorry for it, even though I had promised Jan to tell no one. True I could trust Jan, at least I thought I could. He could at best gain nothing in luring me here. I had nothing on my person worth stealing. Then I ridiculed my fear.

All at once I heard a sound which fairly froze the blood in my veins and made my hair start upright upon my scalp. The sound was a long, low, subdued murmur of many voices in unison. I had once heard something like it in a theater during the play of "Jean Valjean," when the prisoners, all felons, unseen by the audience, are marching by on the way to the galleys chanting one of the jargon songs of the underworld.

What was this sound then that I heard, shut up as I was late at night in the garret of that huge, nameless house on the marshes of Marken? Frozen with terror then in the chair, I gazed with wide eyes at the dark end of the garret space from whence came the sounds. Then the ladder

creaked and the capped head of Jan appeared. He was in his stocking feet and he motioned me to remove my shoes.

"Is er gevaar?" (Is there any danger) I asked.

He put his hand to his mouth to silence me, then he answered slowly:

"Er is gevaar, Gij weet dat het ons verboden." (There is some danger, you know we are forbidden.) "Come softly—do not speak. I must put out the light, but I will guide you—do not fear, but do not speak."

He lifted the lamp, turned down the wick, and blew out the flame, leaving the space wherein we stood in inky blackness. Then he grasped my arm and pushed me along, gently guiding me and stopping each few steps to listen. I know that we came to a doorway, for I felt the difference in the floor and my shoulder brushed against the jamb. I know that we made three turns, and judged by the number of my steps that we went some fifty feet before the hand on my arm halted me. I felt, too, a rush of cold air and smelt the odor of straw or hay, one or the other.

"Here we are," whispered Jan in my ear,

D CRONIES

"kneel down gently, then sit as softly and comfortably as you can—make no noise—then I will open the trap and you can see and hear. Mount —there is a small platform where you can lie at length beside me—now—four steps up—so." Between the loose boards of the partition came gleams of light—I heard the deep droning of a voice below. Jan stealthily and carefully opened a sort of shutter in the wall a few inches, and I saw down into a large room. Men and women were sitting in groups round the three or four kerosene lamps, one of which was smoking, that stood on the tables. Some of the women were knitting, several sat idly, their arms hanging, their heads turned toward an old peasant whom I did not recognize, who was speaking in a deep, resonant voice. Some of the men were standing; some were lying on piles of marsh hay. These groups, all motionless and silent, looked sinister to me. Scarcely visible were some of them in the deep shadows and dim, flickering light from the lamps. A pungent smoke arose which stung my nostrils and smarted my eyes, which smoke I discovered came from a raised

hearth in the very middle of the room, on which a fire of peat burned in the old fashion. For this fire there was no chimney, the smoke passing to the roof and escaping through a square opening left for that purpose. This is the fashion in the older houses on the island.

The size of the room, the roof of which was very dark and somber, still further dimmed the rays of light from the lamps, which here and there fell upon the faces with a sinister effect, bringing out singular effects of light and shade which made me think of Rembrandt's art. Here and there the wrinkled face of some old crone shone forth, but I saw mainly the strong faces of men sharply defined when nearest the lamps. These people, diverse in their attitudes, all expressed on their faces, so motionless, an absolute abandonment of their thoughts to the man who spoke sitting somewhere apart and near the sanded square upon which smoldered the peat fire. It was a most curious picture thus presented, and proved at once the great influence exercised over the mind by those endowed with

the art of the Story-teller. For this was the Story-teller of Marken.

He spoke simply, making few gestures. At first I could understand but little, for the dialect is most obscure, entirely so at times; but as he continued I caught now and again a sentence with which I was tolerably familiar, and was thus able to piece out the narrative.

"Evil seemed the house," he said. "But the old woman entered, for was not black night coming on fast, and the storm seemed ready to sweep all before it. She asked for naught but a shelter of the robbers, and crept into a dark corner where she gnawed a hard crust which she pulled from her pocket. So the robbers left her to herself in the corner, and there she was forgotten, while she dozed off, and soon all was quiet. During the night she was awakened from a sound sleep by a noise, and she saw two strange men with a lantern. Each of them had a long, sharp knife in his hand. She was in fear of her life, poor old woman, because in those days men ate human flesh made into patties, but the old woman re-

membered that her skin was as hard as leather, and thus she comforted herself and put fear from her, knowing that only soft flesh was fit for patties. The robbers never glanced at the corner where she lay trembling, but passed on to the bed in the wall where lay the tired traveler who had carried the large saddle bags—this traveler who was rich, and whose long cloak of fine cloth lay on the settee beside the curtained bed. The robber with the red hair raised the lantern which he carried and seized the traveler's foot, dragging him from the bed, while the other one, who was cursing and muttering, cut off his head by one stout blow—bam! Then they took the cloak, his purse from about his waist, and the cloak and saddle bags, and away they went, leaving the body lying there upon the floor. The poor old woman lay there in the dark, trembling with fear, while outside she heard whispering and cursing. What was she to do?

"Knowing not that the good God had put her there that she might be the means of punishment for the wicked and evil doers, she thought she must get away quickly, for they might remember

that she was there and return to kill her. She was in bitter fear, and when one is in this state one only thinks of saving oneself. Is it not so?"

There was a loud, droning murmur from all the men and women in unison.

"Then in they came, softly creeping, and stopping where she lay, one lifted the lantern and thus they regarded her, disputing, 'Kill her quickly'—'No, I say let her be, she sleeps, she has seen nothing,'—'Kill her, I say!' 'No, you shall not!'

"Coming nearer, the first one held up the lantern so that it shone upon her, and stopped so that he listened to her breathing, but the poor old woman never winked an eye or moved, for she feared for her miserable life, which was as precious to her as yours would be to any of you.

" 'She sleeps,' said the man with the red beard.

" 'But old ones are cunning,' said the one with the lantern.

" 'I can easily kill her,' said the first, 'and then we can salt her down—'

"Now, the poor old woman of course heard every word of this terrible talk, but she had such

control over herself that she never moved an eyelid.

" 'Let us stick her once with the knife,' said the man with the red beard, 'and then throw her to the pigs.'

"Then the old woman heard the pigs in the pen outside go 'Ugh, ugh,' and fear gripped her very marrow. But she never stirred a hair. So they thought she slept and that saved her life.

"Then the robbers took up the dead man, wrapped him up in the quilt from the bed and carried him out, and the old woman lying in the corner heard the pigs in the pen go 'Ugh, ugh.' . . ."

The smoke rising to the roof from the hearth was fast filling my lungs. In vain I tried to suppress it, but I was forced to choke down a strangled cough. I felt Jan grip me by the shoulder, and I thought I saw one of the women below glance upward toward the spot where we lay.

After an interval the Story-teller resumed his narrative, but for some reason which I cannot now comprehend, the sweat started out all over me. What I feared I do not know, for these peo-

ple would not have injured me, I think, even though I had been discovered lying there in the loft. I must have missed some of the narrative in my dismay, for by degrees, when I regained my composure, I heard the narrator say:

"She behaved to them as though nothing had happened to her knowledge, but she had not gone half a mile when she discovered one of the robbers following. So she seated herself and when he came up he said—'Why do you stop here —what's the matter?' He was the man with the red hair—the worst one. But the woman was cute—you shall see. 'I am weary,' said she. 'Could you give me your arm—the arm of an honest man?' So the red-haired man gave her his arm, which she took, and never even trembled, although she was bitterly afraid. So they went on and on until they came to the crossroad, and there—"

"Has Mynheer heard enough?" whispered Jan in my ear. "If so then I think we had better be getting along—'Tis near to an end now, and some of them will be coming out."

I gazed down into the room at the strange

gathering. The Story-teller had risen to his feet. All the men and women were gathered around him, his hands were lifted high above his head, he was whispering loudly. I wanted to stop where I was to see what was coming next, but Jan gently forced me back from the aperture, and seizing me by the arm pushed me along ahead of him. We gained the inner room from which the ladder led downward through the trap and here we relighted the lamp. We then descended the ladder, and there found the woman who had grudgingly admitted us. I wanted to leave a piece of silver for her, but Jan pushed my hand back with a frown of warning. I said good night to her as she let us out of the door on to the dike, but she did not look at me or answer.

We went down the steps at the side of the dike and Jan guided me carefully into a boat which was tied there in the darkness. I could hardly see my hand before my face, but he seemed to know every inch of the surroundings. He silently untied the boat, and without noise sculled it away swiftly down the canal. We were among the tall rushes, I could feel them at

times brushing against my shoulder as we went. He did not speak for fully five minutes, nor did I—it seemed longer.

Then he said, "Mynheer has given me his word not to speak of this on Marken. Is it not so? So much I have done for Mynheer. I have kept my promise."

"But what was the end of the story?" I asked him, "I should like to have heard it."

"Ah, that is not told in one night, nor two, nor three, Mynheer. I myself have not heard the beginning of it, nor yet its end. And here we are at the dike end—I will wish Mynheer good-night—and I will trust him to say naught of this while he is on Marken."

The Portrait of Old Martje

WHEN the present chronicler was ready to begin his painting the Heer Pastoor undertook to smooth the way for him, and indeed that way would have proved a hard one forsooth but for his kindly offices. Marken likes not the stranger, albeit the stranger has proven such a source of revenue, but it must be remembered that not all the Markenites profit by the influx of the hordes who come by fishing boat, or by the small black puffing steamboat daily from Amsterdam. Real Marken closes its doors when the steamer's whistle is heard from the jetty. On this occasion then the Heer Pastoor stept to the open doorway and hailed an object on the

WILLUM KOOITJ

dike outside. This object was in the nature of a bulky bale of clothes, and when it turned at the call, it proved to be a handsome boy, whose body was swelled out already to the size of a man's in wide, cumbersome, blue cloth breeches and an absurdly short jacket of dark green stuff. This boy had been leaning against a board fence, with hands in his pockets, motionless like a statuette.

This puffball-like object was Willum Kooitj, aged ten. Stain the face of one of Donatello's angels with strong walnut juice, and there you have Willum. Kooitj in Dutch means "caged" one, and the name fitted him well. For if ever there was a young imp, Willum Kooitj was he, hidden in the guise of a cherub. The Heer Pastoor explained what was wanted to Willum who regarded me not at all. He permitted me to go along the dike for some distance before he joined me, rolling and yawing in his gait in imitation of his elders up one steeg or alley, then down another, then he mounted a wooden stairway on the outside of a house, threw open a door at the top of it, dropped his "Klompen" from his blue stockinged feet at the threshold, and

called out "Vrouwe! Een Mynheer!" Then in an undertone he gave her the message of the Heer Pastoor. She sat working with a wooden shuttle at a heavy net. "Mynheer is welcome," she said, but there was no cordiality in her voice, nor was there any surprise. The word of the Heer Pastoor was law, it was for her to obey. I laid five gulden in two pieces on the table at her side. At this Willum gave the woman a more audible message, "Mynheer was a painter from America whose pockets were full of money. He wants to make your picture. Sit still for him and he'll make your fortune. The Heer Pastoor didn't say that, but it's so. He's got more in his pocket, I hear it." She heard him without comment. I unpacked my traps and began work at once—no need to pose her, the picture was complete as it was. Willum, after hanging about for a while, contemptuously took himself off without a word of farewell—and so began my first work on Marken. It was days before I won the old dame over so that she would talk to me, but finally I broke the ice and gained her confidence. The Marken women are outwardly cold

as icebergs. Once they are thawed, however, their natures beam upon one like Spanish sunshine.

It was so with this old dame who wore the curls of Marken made of yellow silk hanging down at each side of her withered, tanned old face. What a sweet, wonderful, powerful thing is sympathy! I often caught her studying my face while I worked. How easily a woman can discern sympathy in a man! A word or two from me had completely disarmed her, all her reserve had fallen away like a cloak, the old woman gave me a rare smile, and I knew that I had won her over.

The tale of her sorrowful life came from her thereafter like a flood. "Trouble, Mynheer," she cried, dropping the shuttle and folding her hands over the heavy net, "I could not tell ye all in a week of Sundays, but listen if ye like and ye shall hear." Then the story of her life came forth quietly enough at first, then with increasing vehemence. She had brought twelve children into the world and six of them lay beneath the conical green mound between the dikes.

The man she married, when a young girl, was never lucky or good at fishing and things went from bad to worse until finally a heavy beam of the nets in the trawler fell upon him and he was disabled for so long that they went into debt. After that he barely managed to find food for the family by going out deep sea fishing for the "company" (this is regarded as a step down the ladder, said company being of Volendam, and of a different faith), and even when the herring "schooled" he never had the good fortune in the catch which seemed to fall to the other men—his nets would rarely be full when drawn, while those of the others just along side would be filled to the floats with the fish. He left her one Sunday night to go aboard at the dike end, and when the boat returned the following Saturday night he did not appear, and then she asked the Patroon—the latter told her that the man had not shipped with them when they sailed the week before. And then she told of his body being found off the jetty floating in the water upright in his heavy boots. How it happened was only surmise. It was thought that

he had stepped off the pier in the dark on that gusty, stormy Sunday night when he left her. And then one after another the children passed away—tuberculosis it was, although she did not call it by that name. The elder daughter married well and had assisted them, until she too fell into a rapid decline and died. She worked far into the night at the nets for the Volendammers who always found fault with her work and cheated her because her man was not here to defend her. Finally all were gone and she was left alone, then it was work, work, and hunger. Sometimes it was supperless to bed or beg of the neighbors—but "Gott ik dank" she had never done that.

And so the story of misfortune, hunger, cold and death poured forth and became real to the listener, and the painting, when finished, went to a dealer on the Kalverstraat in Amsterdam, who thought so well of it that he bought it. The Heer Pastoor tells me in the letter which followed me to America, that with the comparatively small sum of money old Martje's comfort is assured for the rest of her life, that is to say

as much comfort as her daily bread will bring her, and so the portrait was good for something after all. And it transpired that Willum Kooitj, who made it his business to know all that transpired on Marken, got wind of the matter, excepting certain details, and told it circumstantially, and with a deal of embroidery in which he personally figured, on the dike to the men and over the fences to the women. Willum when he felt like it was a born "raconteur" and of repute even in Marken where there are dozens who practice the art. Willum told it again and again, and with each repetition it gained something. Then inferior narrators essayed it and thus it circulated. This then is the reason why Marken thereafter opened its doors to the painter.

The Herring Fleet

NINE boats sailed from the jetty that Wednesday night at sundown. I was in the Patroon's boat by way of special courtesy. Morning, cold, gray and gusty, saw us off the Texel half way from Wieringen. The other eight boats were tossing on the dull greenish-gray water to the westward, their sails gleaming redly against the sky. Two Stavoren boats were hovering near us, to the manifest wrath of the Patroon. To the westward we saw the smoke of a steam trawler and in half an hour her hull was tossing up and down within a quarter of a mile of us. The Patroon swore in his yellow beard and spat overboard.

The lanterns of the trawler had not been turned out although it was an hour past sunrise. The trawler was from Ghoole, and her nets hung from the forward mast rusty brown in the gray light. Now and then she dipped her rusty fore-foot into the brine, and tossed it in an emerald and white shower over her fore deck. The water ran from her scuppers in a creamy yellow froth. In the iron cage on the fore pole was a fisherman in yellow oilskins, his face showing as a spot of red under his tarpaulin hat. This man was the lookout on the watch for the herring. All at once the trawler's chain cable rattled in the hawse pipes and her anchor dropped in eight fathom of water. I asked a question of the Patroon; the only answer I got was a single puff of smoke from his lips. He gave an order to the four men in the bow of the "bom" (a wide, flat-bottomed fishing boat with lee boards), up went our tanned jib flapping in the stiff breeze, and away we went before the wind. In twenty minutes we had left the steam trawler wallowing far behind in the greeny yellow waters, and fetched up the gap of the Helder through which

YOUNG MOTHER AND CHILD

we at length gained the open sea. The light fishing boats followed our lead in a line. All at once we rounded up and, dropping our jib and mainsail, lay head to the seas in a smoother strip of water. The men jumped to the nets and hauled at them seemingly without order, but I saw finally that there was method in their handling. The skipper vouchsafed the information that there was two fathom of water under our keel, and that he expected herring shortly. I watched the men at the nets. A herring net is some fifty feet long and twelve deep. When cast overboard it sinks to a vertical wall weighed down by "sinkers" and held upright by corks and floats. The nets are usually fastened to each other by heavy rope laid out over the side on a roller. The boat drifts with the tide dragging the nets, and the fishermen watch the floats for a sign of resistance. The herring lie at the bottom of the sea occasionally rising to play. It is then the men so play the purse strings or lines that they bring the circumference of the nets around the school of fish and then haul in madly with hoarse cries and gutturals. One of the

boats astern hauled up a blue flag which snapped in the breeze. A quick glance and a word from the Patroon and our boat, under rapidly hauled up jib and mainsail, fell away before the wind and bore down the line to the blue flag, dragging our wall of nets astern. We bore up under her lee, a line went whizzing over the dozen feet or so that separated us, was caught by willing, ready hands and we fell away from her. We were in the midst of a large school which had gone down, so said the Patroon. The men hauled in the ropes and the nets began to rise to the surface. All at once the men sent up a yell of glee. All around us was a gleam of silver—then flashing of light—the herring were in the net! The surface of the water was alive with fish gleaming like molten silver. The men worked madly, singing together and working in unison, each man in his place. The well was soon full of jumping fish. The net was so full of herring that the meshes broke with their weight. All around huge cod and dogfish jumped and snapped among them. The end of the net tore away with the great weight, and

barrels of fish got away, but there was enough and plenty saved. The Patroon then gave the word and the men sprang to the windlass and hauled the net on board, the fish falling in showers of silver all around and covering the deck. Up went our jib and foresail and we bore away leaving the other boats busily hauling in the fish which were "schooling" all about us. The Patroon motioned to me and we went below for coffee. We drank a hot bowl apiece and curled up on the damp mattresses on the floor for a good sleep. We had secured our fare and were bound home to Marken. When I awoke it was nightfall. The "bom" was creeping along under a smart breeze, the blue flag snapping at our masthead. Just ahead was the jetty of Marken only a mile or two away.

The Great Storm

IT happened on the last Sunday of the month of September. The sun had been shining all day and the sound of the church bells of Volendam and Edam was carried along by the whistling wind in a chain of sweet sounds. On Marken the service was over, and the congregation passed out along the brick-paved roadway which leads to the cemetery where now not a tree or bush is to be found since the solitary poplar blew down. No flowers are planted there, and there is not even a wreath to be found upon the mound under which are the graves. The mound is enclosed by a high iron fence, in which is a tall gate, and is entirely surrounded by water.

A rough bridge of planks gives access to this sad-looking island, so bleak and desolate looking. Rank grayish-green grass tossed by the wind grows thickly over the conical mound. Some of the women pause for a moment on reaching the small bridge leading to it. The men pass on stolidly to the road leading to the dike where the fishing boats are made fast all in a row, their red flags streaming in the wind. Thin wisps of smoke rise from some of the chimneys of the houses. Strings of fish drying flap and beat violently against the tarred walls. The sun goes down in a great blaze of crimson, green and violet—night comes on. The men in the dike end are busy making everything fast and ship-shape about the boats, for the wind is coming now in fierce gusts. The Zuyder Zee is wind-swept and of a dark brown color, over which white crests of foam rise high in the air and scatter before the blasts. There is a swelling roar in the air, a moaning wail long-drawn sounds amid the boom of the waves dashing on the stones of the dike. The fishermen along the dike in twos and threes lean towards the blasts as they

make their way towards the houses. Doors and shutters are slamming and the wind shakes the squatty wooden houses on their pile foundations.

Night came on and the Pastoor and I sat in the window of his sitting room watching the dike and the tossing boats tugging at their moorings there. The storm continued to sweep over the sea with undiminished fury. There came a tapping at the door, the latch lifted and the door flew violently open, and a man stumbled in. When he caught his breath, pointing over his shoulder, he said, "A man has come ashore on the dike end. Will the Heer Pastoor come?" On the dike we found a knot of fishermen who made way for the Heer Pastoor. Lying on his back was the body of a man, heavily bearded, clad in rough water-soaked clothing and heavy sea boots. His eyes were half open and gleamed in the light of the lantern which one of the men held.

"Quite dead, Mynheer," said one of the men. "There must be a wreck somewhere out yonder." He pointed out over the wild waters of the Zuyder Zee now gleaming in the moonlight,

for the heavy clouds had been blown away to the westward. But there was no visible sign of any vessel or object there on the tossing water.

The Heer Pastoor knelt down beside the poor water-soaked body, placed the limp hands across its breast, and then raised his own thin brown hands in silent supplication to the Father of all, while the fishermen uncovered their bowed heads. Then they covered the body with a quilt and two of the men bore it away to the church. All the long night the storm raged. I slept but little, and even in my troubled dreams I was conscious of its fury. In the morning I found the Heer Pastoor awaiting me in the small sitting room where we ate (Beneden-Kamer). He had already been at the church, and although it was but nine o'clock the body of the sailor had been placed beneath the small green mound in the presence of the Heer Burgomeester. Nothing was found upon the body to identify it, nor was there any wreckage on the dike to show that a vessel had gone down. "Another mystery of the sea, Mynheer," he said, shaking his head

sadly. "This is the seventh since I have been here, and of these not one has ever been identified. They come to Marken. Why? That is a mystery."

On the dike end I joined the men sitting in the sun. They were talking of the drowned sailor. They spoke of something which excited my curiosity. Now on Marken if you would satisfy your curiosity, do not seem to desire information, particularly when the men are gathered together. I listened eagerly, pretending indifference. I then sought old Gerrit Willemzoon, whom I found sitting before his door busy over his sail with awl and twine. To him I adroitly made known my curiosity as to what I had heard the men discussing on the dike. When he had lighted the cigar I gave him, he said, "What Mynheer has heard is true, I know it. When a dead body has come ashore, as they all do in the Zuyder Zee, we first look to see if he sucks his thumb, for if so then he is a sailor, and the sea will not rest until it gets him back. He must be put back or the storm will not abate. And if he

JUST BOYS

be buried, and the storm continues, then he is known by us to be of the sea which claims him. It is so, Mynheer. I know it."

"Then this man was not a seaman," I said, "for the storm has passed with the night. See how bright the sun shines, and how clear is the sky!" He did not look at me, but he said, "Even so, Mynheer, he was of the sea—I know it," and would say no more.

At noon the Heer Pastoor returned to the house and we dined together. He was unusually silent and preoccupied.

I told him of the things I had overheard on the dike, and of my conversation with old Gerrit Willemzoon. He seemed troubled at this, and when I asked him pointblank if what Gerrit had told me of the matter was true, he evaded my question, and begged me not to inquire too deeply into the superstitions of the fishermen. "It were better not," he said, adding, "We have an old proverb, Mynheer, which says 'Wat beter kars of bril als' de uil niet sien wil' " (of what use are candles and spectacles

when the owl will not see). By which I understood that he did not wish to commit himself in the matter.

However, I found that imp, Willum Kooitj, of whom I had made use on other occasions, and by dint of questioning him, I learned that he had seen the men at the mound again after the Heer Pastoor had prayed over the sailor's body in the church, that he had hidden behind the shed opposite, and that "they" (meaning the men, he would not specify them further) had opened the door in the mound and removed the body, that when "they" examined it, "they" found the sailor's thumb in his mouth, and that they then carried him down to the dike and put him in the sea. No amount of questioning him elicited anything further other than a recapitulation. Willum seemed to fear that he had said too much already, and although I gave him a silver gulden, he seemed dumb with fright. Thereafter he shunned me for a time, and I learned no more of the matter.

Melanij's Fortune

THE house is like all the others outside, one story, black with a tiled roof, containing two, three or four rooms. Of these the kitchen or living room is the largest. The ceiling is of rough smoked-colored and time-stained spruce boards, the gable facing the brick-paved roadway. Through the small square green shuttered window with its lace curtain, I can see the mast of a fishing boat which is moored at the dike. The room is fairly crammed with treasures of blue china, copper and brass, the latter polished and gleaming like gold. From the rafters hang lines of jugs, dried fish, and hams. The chimney-piece is of old, old blue tiles, each

one with a different picture of figures, trees, cows, boats and quaintly drawn tulips. There is a small narrow shelf midway over the fireplace, under which is a short curtain of plum-colored calico gathered on a rod. At either side of the fireplace is a row of six plum-colored tiles depicting Biblical scenes. At the back of the fireplace is an iron plate smooth and polished reflecting the copper kettle suspended on a hooked chain over a fire box of brass, containing a few lumps of "stone coal" as the islanders call it to distinguish it from peat, which is often used. The hearth is of black tile in one piece polished by frequent rubbing. Around this are arranged five other large flat tiles of dull red as a sort of framework. At either side in the angles are severally a china foot stove of quaint form, and a sort of low stool upon which is a copper brasier on which is set a tall conical kettle of copper fashioned in a unique design and showing rude, hammered, rivet heads. At the right in the angle formed by back wall and window stands a low rush-bottomed "fiddle back" chair. Beside it is a locker like that in a ship's cabin show-

ing brass handles. Above this are three narrow shelves crammed with blue plates and saucers standing upright, the spaces about them filled with small daguerreotypes of quaintly costumed Dutch peasants. Above is a mirror in two compartments in a carved black frame, the upper panel showing a painting of an antique sleigh surmounted by a yellow coach body in the window of which is seen a bonneted female waving a handkerchief. The sleigh is drawn by a huge hollow-backed Flemish horse astride of which is the driver in a "stove-pipe" hat. The sky is a vivid blue against which the steam from the horse's red nostrils appears in clouds. Below it hangs a carved boxwood pipe rack from which depend three long "church wardens." There is also a well filled twine box of mahogany on the front of which in brass nails is the date 1726, and the letters W. N.

Under the window is an eight-legged table covered with orange oilcloth. The floor is of wide hewn planks painted a dark brown and varnished thickly. At the left of the chimney is the walled-in bed in a shallow recess. This

bed slopes sharply from the head to the foot. It is spread with a gayly embroidered quilt of coarse canvas like linen, stitched in large squares, something like Russian work. Over it a sheet of linen is turned down some dozen inches at the top. Here are mounted two large feather pillows, the cases embroidered quaintly in blue and red wool. At the foot is a huge thick feather covering, beneath which the occupant undoubtedly swelters. It resembles a rolled-up mattress in size, and I have never yet seen a peasant bed without one. There is a sliding door to this bed, so that once between the covers, Mynheer or Mevrouwe may pull it to and therein swelter in security. A strip of China matting is laid here before the bed, and two high-backed slatted chairs painted a bright green, with rush seats and spindled legs are against the sliding door.

Above the bed is a long narrow shelf on which stand six brass candlesticks of varied form all brightly scoured.

At the side of the bed stands a huge black oaken cabinet with a wealth of paneling and carving, and innumerable drawers which I know

to contain linen, lace, embroideries, brocades and ancient silverware. I have seen these treasures many times and have handled them. The top of this old cabinet is filled with tiny, fragile India cups, bowls and Chinese laquer-ware all of undoubted age. This is not one of the show houses of Marken, and it is rarely if ever opened to the curious tourist. So the objects described are authentic and not arranged for sale.

Hanging on the front of the cabinet is a framed photograph of the beloved little Princess Juliana, the pride and joy of all Holland, between those of the Consort and Queen Wilhelmina.

This house and the contents described are Melanij's fortune. Read on and you shall know all that I know about it, Melanij herself, and her father and mother, and all, as far as I am able to remember, in the words of the Heer Pastoor who related it to me one rainy autumn day when it was too dark to paint and too wet to walk the dikes. "Those are the Koopmans who live in that house, Koopman, his vrouwe, and Melanij. The house is Melanij's fortune.

Koopman was a dealer in herring, and amassed some money in the fish, due as well to good luck as to his ability and frugality. People say that he was a hard man to deal with but he was ever a just one. He was fully fifty years old when he married the daughter of old Bischop, the baker. She was not less than thirty-five herself, and neither pretty nor well-favored, but she was tall, of sturdy frame and could work hard. She was of dark skin and robust health, with large, even white teeth like peeled almonds. They were married here on Marken the year before I came here. I am told that she brought him a dowry of one thousand gulden—that is all. She could work hard, as I have said, and she did so. No house on Marken was better kept. It was, as it is, a model. Koopman and his wife could read and write—not much more—but they were and are shrewd. When she had finished her work she always seated herself on the wooden bench beside the door. There she knitted woolen socks and jackets. These she sold for good prices. They were well made. Koopman

OUNG FISHERMEN

was away most of the week buying and selling herring at Amsterdam. When he was at home he always got up at daybreak and opened the green window shutters noisily; then he let out the cat, and soon Vrouwe Koopman came out to get coal from the shed for the fire. It never occurred to either of them to bring it in the night before. The Koopmans kept to themselves. They never discussed their affairs with the neighbors. Koopman is a fat, short, red-faced man, as Mynheer knows. He was always as he is now, a worker. He has always worn blue stockings, snuff-colored fustian trousers, a checked waistcoat and a short velveteen jacket with silver buttons.

"Marken people are not meat eaters, neither are the Koopmans. Ordinary peasants' fare consists of dried fish, such as cod and herring, dried peas and beans, eggs when they can get them, and cheese. The people here retire at nine in summer and seven in winter. Candles are too expensive to burn save on festal days, so they often go to bed without light. Some burn kerosene

nowadays in summer, but they are extravagant. In winter the glowing fire on the hearth is often the only light in the house.

"Then one day came a great surprise to Marken. Vrouwe Koopman presented a daughter to her husband, and on the door was displayed to the neighbors an embroidered pink cushion of lace and ribbons, as is the custom. In a week she was seated again on the bench beside the door, but now she nursed her child knitting busily the while. A great change seemed to come over Koopman, all the neighbors noticed it. He remained at home for longer intervals. He carried the child in his arms while the Vrouwe did the housework. He even sang to it in a hoarse voice. He often sat on the dike gazing at the child in his arms as if spellbound. When Melanij—that was what they named her to me on baptismal day, first tried to walk he cried real tears of joy, and I often saw him lying on his back on the dike with the child sitting on his breast playing with his beard. He went no more to the Koffij huis. If he was outside the house watching the fishing boats coming in, a

cry from Melanij would bring him to the house on a run. Thus time passed and Melanij grew to girlhood. I must say that the Koopmans were good church goers, and regular in their attendance. They gave all that was demanded of them, and without urging. Melanij thus was brought up carefully in the fear of God and reverence for his commandments. When she was six years old she went to school, when she was ten years old she was really beautiful. One could not help turning in the street to look after her, and the pride which the Koopmans took in her was shared by the whole community. Then all at once when she was hardly more than fourteen, smallpox broke out and Melanij came down with it, to the despair of her parents. Night and day Koopman sat up with his sick daughter. He could hardly be induced to leave the bedside for food or rest. Hardly anyone dared to speak to him, so great seemed his anguish. When the crisis came he broke down and wept. Sitting outside on the bench beside the door, he gazed stupidly at all who came and went, answering no questions, and heedless of what went on around

him. When the doctor told him that she would live, that the danger was past, he brushed him aside and threw himself at her bedside, sobbing with joy. Melanij slowly recovered, but her great beauty was gone, gone forever."

He paused for a moment in the narrative, then resumed.

"Mynheer has seen Melanij, and he knows how shocking is her appearance. The lovely rose tints of her sweet face had vanished and were replaced by patches of brown where the skin was thickened and pitted by the ravages of the disease. She was really hideous to look upon and has so remained. The one redeeming feature was the beauty of her eyes and these shone forth like clear stars. Koopman after her convalescence redoubled his devotion to the girl. Nothing was denied her. Coarse and rude himself, he showered delicate attention upon his afflicted child. A small room at the side of the house was set apart for her and fitted up with comforts and indeed luxuries hitherto unknown on Marken. The Burgomeester's daughter had no such com-

forts as Melanij enjoyed. Koopman bought a carpet for her room at the fair in Amsterdam, and the window of her room which looked on the dike had a heavy silk damask curtain. On Sunday when she went to church, her clothes were the richest of all. The Koopmans now desired to settle her marriage and gave out that her dowry would be five thousand gulden. Girls are betrothed early on Marken, but Melanij had no admirers in spite of the promised dowry. So hideous does she appear clad in her rich clothing, that the young men turn from her.

"On the days when her father is at home, she walks with him on the dike hand in hand. Otherwise, she sits on the bench beside the door with her mother, working gayly colored embroideries. Koopman has prospered wonderfully in his business in these last few years. He is, I think, a rich man, as riches are counted on Marken, but for all his wealth, no young man approaches Melanij with a view to marriage.

"Koopman does not realize how hideous is Melanij's appearance. To him, blinded by his

great love for her, she appears beautiful and indeed, Mynheer, she is beautiful of soul, and I who know her well, know whereof I speak.

"And so, in spite of her fortune, Melanij is unsought. Five thousand gulden and the house is what Koopman offers with his daughter, and no man seeks her."

I glanced through the open doorway through which I could see mother and daughter sitting on the green bench beside the door. On the window sill was a box filled with bright scarlet geraniums against which Melanij's head, in the Marken cap, was defined. Some mysterious force attracted her attention, she moved slightly, then glanced in our direction, and seeing us, she smiled. Then as if troubled or embarrassed by our gaze, she arose, gathered up her work and disappeared through the door into the house. I glanced at the Heer Pastoor; he sat pensively, his chin supported in his lean brown hand. All at once a light dawned upon me. Melanij and the Heer Pastoor!—"Well," I said to myself, "and why not?"

UTTING ON HER SKATES

The Heer Pastoor

LET me make for you a portrait of the Marken pastor. Slight and delicate in appearance, his face seemed at once the typical face of one of the ancient apostles. Almost triangular it began with a broad white brow much furrowed with fine wrinkles which were carried down in sharp lines on either temple to the chin, and thus defined cheeks which were ascetically hollowed. This face hallowed by tones as yellow as old ivory was dominated by blue eyes which seemed burning with a secret fire. It was divided by a long, clean-cut nose, thin and straight with delicately sculptured nostrils, beneath which was a wide, large mouth with

strongly marked lips, from which when he spoke, even casually, issued a compelling, resonant voice, the tones of which went straight through to the heart of the listener. His thin, fine chestnut hair receding from the temples, lay flat upon his head. His hands were short and his stubby fingers might in another have denoted coarse tendencies; slight to ungracefulness, his shoulders were too prominent and his legs too thin. His appearance at first sight was not pleasing. The distinctive characteristics of the man, disclosed only to those who could appreciate, were the emblems of thought, faith and martyrdom, the pallor of constancy and self-abnegation, the voice of love for his fellows.

This man was worthy of the primitive Church, and could hardly exist save in an isolated spot like Marken. One sees the effigies of such in the old masterpieces of the Netherland painters —faces shining with the spirit of martyrology, stamped with the die of human greatness through suffering conviction—sees in them that indefinable something which embellishes the commonest features, gilding them with the inner

light which comes to men vowed to any form of worship. Balzac defines conviction as human will attaining to its highest reach. It was this very conviction which showed in the sallow face of Marken's Heer Pastoor.

His house was typical of the man. Of one story it was of pitch blackened wood, its walls slabbed with wide thick boards set horizontally. The window frames were painted white, and there were strong thick wooden shutters, with buttons with which to fasten them when the winter gales blew fiercely. The roof was of dull reddish tiles to which time had given lovely, mellow peachy tints. The sloping roof covered the low attic to which in times of flood the people retire for safety.

Two rooms divided by a narrow hallway occupied the ground floor. At the end of this hallway was a ladder leading to the attic above. The open door invited one to enter. The house seemed to be common property, as indeed it was. Entering, one saw the general living room which communicated with a small sort of kitchen in the rear. In this room was an oaken table upon

which were some books, one of them open. A large well-worn tapestried armchair was beside the table. There were also a number of common wooden rush-bottomed chairs painted dark green. Against the wall stood a large beautifully carved cabinet. The fireplace was of blue delft tiles, of great age evidently, and above it was a narrow shelf curtained in plum-colored stuff, from beneath which hung a long brass fire hook. There were four heavy brass candlesticks on the shelf. The brass fire box contained the ashes of a smoldering fire. In the wall was a curtained bed in the Marken style with coarse yellow linen sheets turned back over the thick feather bolster. The woodwork and rafters of the ceiling were quite black with age and smoke. A tall Zeeland clock in a wooden case from which hung a number of heavy brass weights, ticked solemnly on the wall beside the walled bed. The room was perfectly clean and well kept. The fragrance of virtue exhaled from it.

The Heer Pastoor found a stranger thus studying his environment when he entered. The invitation to his house was to the artist a signal

honor, and he had brought his sketchbook with him. The comment upon the work of the American was intelligent and appreciative and after satisfying his courteous curiosity, the American broke the silence by saying, "You have an obedient flock, Mynheer, here upon Marken."

"You will think my church poor and shabby," he answered, "but we have no money to spend on it. The people as you see are poor and the fishing is not what it was. True, the tourists come and a revenue is the result of their coming, but it is not as much as you would think, and, alas, with them has come a worldliness which is undermining our ancient faith, particularly with the young men. It means heavy responsibilities and increased labor for me—but do not think that I complain. I love my work! Life here is reduced to its very simplest expression, but I would not change. God willing I shall die here among my people. I found them in a dreadful condition when I came."

Tea was served by a very old woman; a dish of cold boiled eggs, butter, black bread, honey, and under an earthen pot on the table a small piece

of candle burned heating the water for the tea, which each made for himself, ladling it into the old cups with a small, short-handled silver spoon.

Thus the present writer passed the first hour of his acquaintance with the Heer Pastoor of Marken, and in that quaint room he told of his early struggles, his disappointments and some of his triumphs, and somehow when the writer came away that evening in the ruddy glow of the setting sun, life to him seemed better, truer, cleaner and more worth while than ever before. Many were the hours we spent together that summer, and to him the present writer owes much of his knowledge of Marken and its people, which otherwise would have been to him the sealed book it is to the great world outside.

Thus it was with a sense of deep personal loss that the writer received the news of the passing of this man the following winter, due to his devotion and duty. Taking cold during a period of bitter weather, he contracted pneumonia, from which he could not recover. Under that small green mound on Marken he now lies peacefully, a martyr to the duty to which he was consecrated.

The Wedding

ANTJE, the pretty daughter of the light-house keeper, is to be married to-day, albeit her engagement of long standing promised at one time to drag on for an indefinite period. Marriage on Marken is a very serious undertaking, there are so very many formal regulations to be observed in complying with the laws of the Church community as well as the various formalities demanded by the crown. Yet the reasons for the delay in such a slow, matter-of-fact community as Marken, where life passes smoothly and calmly, were unusual and surprising.

Separating the confusing details of much of

the gossip, I learned that the father of Antje's intended was the sailmaker, who spent much of his time away from home and he and his wife quarreled almost continually because the sailmaker refused to give his consent to the match. As this consent was necessary according to law, matters were difficult for the young couple. Antje I knew well. On my former visits to Marken I remembered her as a delightful little creature in the highly ornate island costume, who ran like a deer on the dike, and was nearly always first to reach the tourists who landed, and was greatly in demand for snap-shot photographs by them, for which she was well paid, although she never asked for anything, unlike the others who were so importunate in demanding "Baby pennies."

And then on my return I missed her, and although it was five years since I had last seen her, I did not realize the passage of time. I saw her at church on Sunday, a tall, sweet-looking, demure girl, who walked with her eyes cast down, though I doubt not for an instant that she saw all that happened about her.

WEDDING COSTUME

There seemed also to be some trouble about the name of the young man. Marretje endeavored to explain it to me, but she became so involved and technical, and used so many Marken dialectic words that the matter is hopelessly entangled in my mind, but whatever the trouble about the state license, at length, after a delay that was painful, the legal obstructions were removed and the permission delivered to the young man in a large white envelope with four stamps and the Royal seal upon it. And also on the board hanging at the right hand of the door of the Burgomeester was tacked a white paper properly stamped and bearing the names of Niklaas Willemzoon and Antje Bokk and the date of their coming wedding, all taxed according to the law and custom of her Gracious Majesty Wilhelmina, Queen of the Netherlands, Patroness and Defender of the faith and the people.

Marken turned out in full force to show its sympathy and affection for the young couple. The lighthouse keeper was there and so was the baker, also the dike warden in a tall silk hat,

but these, excepting the sailmaker, who scowled in his front seat in impotent ill temper, constituted, with the present writer, the male element at the office of the Burgomeester that windy June day. There was much signing of stamped paper, and swearing upon the Bible held by the clerk, a pallid young man in black whose eyes were sore, and who was the personification of dignity and the solemnity of his office as support to the Heer Burgomeester. The party then repaired to the church, where the ceremony was performed by the Heer Pastoor, and then the bell was rung three times three for luck, and the picturesque throng walked through the streets of the village. At the Koffij huis, old Antonij stood in the doorway with a bunch of firecrackers in his hand. As the couple drew nigh, he scratched a match, and touching it to the string, dropped the bunch into a pail and nimbly hopped back out of danger. Dirks, the tailless cat, was so frightened by the cracking and snapping of the firecrackers that she fled under a high dresser with ears laid back tightly and fur erect. Here drink was served to all.

To the bride a sweet yellow liquor called "Brides Tears," served by the "Knecht" (boy servant), and "borreltje" to the men folks, which concoction is just plain gin and bitters.

Now comes forth the wife of the proprietor with a square of cheese, which, with a knife, she hands to the groom, who cuts it in several pieces which are handed about. The old Vrouwe says impressively in a cracked voice:

"Die Mijn Kaas snijdt' als een schuit, So die jaag ik mijn deur uit,"—which means that "Should any one cut or hack (or waste) the cheese, throw him out of the door," with which admonition to the bride against wastefulness, the procession passes on. At the home of the bride a table is set in the large living room lined with blue china, tiles, brass pots and urns, and the four walled-in cupboard-like beds. On the tables were piles of Amsterdam *sche Koerstjes*, *Roodeletters*, *Goudesche sprits*, *Utrechtsche-theerandjes*, *Nijmeegsche Moppen*, and *Krakel-ingen hopjes*, all cakes both of cinnamon and sugar, and honey, and salt, and all of local rep-

utation and great celebrity. Cakes are eaten thus at all celebrations, births, marriages, and deaths, each and all have their little feasts and appropriate ceremonies. Sometimes here on Marken they will eat biscuits and mice on the birth of an heir, the mice being cakes containing caraway seed and all covered with glistening sugar. The cakes are rough on top for the boy, but if it be a girl, then it is fine and long of shape and smooth texture. Bridal cake is unknown, but there are what are called "bruidsuikers," bonbons tied up in small, square, white paper bags and inscribed "from the bride and bridegroom." These bags are tied with narrow red and green ribbon (red for love, green for hope), and it is the custom to scatter these before the door for the credit of the house.

Indoors to-day when all were seated, the yellow liquor called "bruidstranen" (bride's tears) was served and all admired the little flakes of gold leaf floating in it. "Bolussen," too, was passed. This is a soggy sort of cake dripping with syrup, of which the people are inordinately fond, and comes from Leiden. I could not eat

mine, but, watching my chance, dropped it under the table, where the cat ate it noisily.

Some young men now entered the room, grinning at the newly married couple, who sat at the head of the table holding hands openly. They were from one of the boats which had just come in from Amsterdam, it being Saturday. One of these carried a cornet and drew from it alternately discordant, ear-piercing blasts and gurgling, broken notes, of such anguish that the pig in the pen outside joined in feelingly, filling the air with painful sounds.

A strange-looking dish of viands, partaken of with great gusto, was passed around. When it reached me I asked my neighbor what it was, and she informed me that it was pickled raw fish. It was very red and blue, and looked in its bloody juice very unwholesome and uninviting, but I found it to taste very good indeed. It was very highly spiced with bay leaves and cloves. Then "Appelbolen en Bisschop" was passed about—this is baked apples and spiced claret. I dared not refuse, as such an act on the part of a guest is inexcusable. By this time I was so sur-

feited with pickles, sweets, and spiced wine, that I excused myself, pleading that I must really do some painting, at which the bride and groom both nodded pleasantly to me, and then I proposed their health in as good Marken language as I could command, and this, be it said in candor, is very limited and of such quality that I used the word for "clothes press" when I should have said "great prosperity," at which they all laughed uproariously and nudged each other, saying that Mynheer George was a great joker! My present to the bride was a pair of ivory and steel curling tongs, and to the groom a safety razor set, in the selection of which I had the advice of their respective parents.

As I came away a beverage called "Advokaat" made of brandy, eggs, sugar and spices was being passed. The entertainment was supposed to last the whole afternoon, and I imagine that the cost was considerable to the respective families of the bride and groom. Until late at night the festivities continued, and passing the house in the evening I saw a crowd of people sitting about the room and in the center two or

three couples dancing sedately to the music of a concertina and the before mentioned discordant cornet. I understand that there are some other peculiarities to the celebration in which the women take part. but those are of such a nature that I can not well introduce them here, and really as I did not see them but only had them from hearsay, I would better not introduce them in this chronicle. Suffice it to say that they are very free in character, and are rather frowned upon nowadays.

Thus are the social customs of this simple and homely island being modified by influences which are busy here as elsewhere, even in places where the veneer of modernity is practically unknown. "Wij houden van Muziek," says the old Vrouwe, shaking her two yellow silken curls at me, "Mynheer sees that, also on Marken 'Wij lacht' dikwijls' " (we are merry, too). The tourist rarely has an opportunity of seeing the Markenite laugh. They are of very solemn demeanor to the stranger, but in their gatherings among themselves these austere grim-looking people are anything but solemn.

To-morrow being Sunday, the festivities will end promptly at midnight. On Marken the sanctity of the day is carefully observed, even though the boat from Amsterdam brings the invariable crowd of tourists who throng the streets and gape into the windows and doors of the houses. In spite of this, Sunday is observed by the peasants and their families. The younger element secretly welcomes the general modern destruction of the old superstitions, with a sort of gleeful satisfaction at being in a way freed from the fear of Deity. They still attend and keep up a certain relation with the Church on the general cautiously suspicious principle of being on the safe side until sure that there is no real danger. The women and girls naturally cling to the established Church more firmly than the men, but it seems to me that their religion is more a direct fear and respect for the Heer Pastoor than otherwise.

Looking to-night from my window along the dike, and the shining waterway, before going to bed, the only living thing in view is a large white cat gleaming in the moonlight on the top

of a post. All at once old Patij's door opened, a broad gleam of yellow light shot across the brick-paved dike. I heard her cracked voice calling "Poos-Poos! 'Tis time to go to bed."

Sunday in Church

ON Sunday he who tarries on Marken, as well as the native, must attend Church in the morning if he would stand well with the community. The rules of the Reformed Church of the Netherlands are conscientiously strict and tolerate no backsliders. The Church is as powerful in its demands as is the "free Kirk o' Scotland," which, indeed, it recalls; and one is irresistibly reminded of the Lothian plowman described by Robert Louis Stevenson, as being "perplexed wi' leisure" when one sees the groups of hard-featured, clean-shaven fishermen in their Sunday best outside the church at Marken, solemnly standing about the door waiting for

TYPES IN SUNDAY DRESS

the last peal of the bell, while the women enter by twos and threes with eyes demurely cast down, yet noting everyone and everything. All the Markenites are Protestant, severely so, from the Burgomeester down to soapy-faced Klaas, just appointed assistant "Waagmeester."

On the front settee was the Heer Burgomeester in stiff Sunday coat, his chin, lip and neck newly shaven and his black hair brushed straight up from his forehead which gleamed white above the tan of his cheeks. At his side sat Mevrouwe in all the pomp of her position as chief lady of Marken. She looked neither to the right nor left, but straight ahead, her eyes seemingly fixed upon the center panel of the reading desk on the platform, but one opines that little escaped her of the movements and personalities of those who entered the church.

The town Bailiff (Baljuw) and his consort sat at the left, he a weazened little man with a large wen on the back of his neck which glowed an angry red amid the sparse fringe of sandy hair above his neck-cloth. Mevrouwe Bailiff

sat beside him in conscious dignity and rectitude sniffing occasionally and ostentatiously wiping the corners of her thin lips with an unusually large folded handkerchief, heavily odorous with farina extract, her other hand tightly holding a small cut glass scent bottle with a silver top well in view.

Behind these important personages stretch the well-filled benches on either hand, a broad aisle between of clean scrubbed boards, for all the world like the interior of a Scotch non-conformist meeting house, save, of course, for the difference in costume, without which the two peoples have something unexplainable in common. Meldrum, in his careful estimate of the Hollander, speaks of this coincidence: "The frank, honest, unrefined calling of a spade a spade, the pride of family and the taste for an 'Ell of Genealogy,' the virtue or vice of savingness, the fluctuation between the sober and refined humor of the workaday hours and a boisterous hilarity in feasts and holidays, the good housewifery of the well-to-do family, the forms of the religious services, all these traits of present-day Holland

had their counterpart in Scotland." (Meldrum's "Holland and the Hollanders.")

Lastly my eye dwells upon the stately, erect figure of old Marretje Thijssen Teerhuis, sitting well up to the front at the edge of the settee, in an uncomfortable attitude, her sharp old eyes taking in every detail of the costumes and behavior of the village aristocracy. She, too, carries a cut glass scent bottle, which I am convinced she abstracted from the stock in her show house. I note, too, that draped over her left arm and therefore plainly in sight as towards the aisle, she carries draped an elegant embroidered silk shawl with long-knotted fringe, upon which more than once fell the eyes of the Heer Burgomeester's lady. But I mention these small details only that you may see the picture more clearly.

At the church door is a large board, upon which the notices by the Heer Pastoor are tacked. One reads "Aanstaanden Zonday van daag over acht dagen." That is to say, "On Sunday next, this day week" etc., etc. This board is eagerly scrutinized by the women as they enter. The

men before entering "scan the sky with knowing eye." The greeting is "Daag, Mynheer" or "Jongen," as the case may be, and the conversation always begins by comment upon the weather. "Hoe is het weder? Het is weder fraai van daag. 'Tis wordt beter, wij zullen hebben een' fraaien daag. Des te beter want gisteren was het ongestadig en veranderlijk." (How is the weather? It is fine to-day and improving. We shall have a fine day, so much the better; for yesterday was so unsettled and changeable.)

In the cool days of autumn the women carry little boxes containing burning charcoal (stoofjes) upon which they rest their feet, for the church is illy heated and the wind blows through it. The men sit on one side, the women on the other. There is a small narrow gallery, too, where men sit by themselves. On the mainland the old order whereby the sexes sat apart is changing, but here on Marken old customs prevail. Hark! The Voorsanger (literally foresinger) has begun the service by impressively reading a chapter of Scripture and the Com-

mandments. Then seating himself, he gives place to the Heer Pastoor, who, after scanning the throng before him, gives out the number and the first words of a Psalm. Beside his reading desk, on a small shelf, stands a brass-bound sand-glass. It has not been turned, however, so the sand is not running.

The building, clean and whitewashed as it is, smells close; a peculiar odor it is, too, not unfamiliar, either, but such as one identifies with schoolhouses and public halls. One might say that it here smells orthodox.

The sermon is so very technical and dialectic that I can only gather the meaning of a sentence here and there. It has to do with the punishments of the hereafter, and is divided into firstly's and secondly's. The congregation do not seem greatly impressed, or it may be that they are too stolid to show their feelings, but at any rate the good Heer Pastoor worked himself into a tremendous passion over their coming fate, and seemed quite out of breath when he finally seated himself on the plain settee behind the desk, mopping his head and face.

The two collectors, or deacons, now solemnly rise and take down from hooks on the right and left two singular-looking black bags on the end of long poles, and begin a tour of the benches. Note how dexterously they whip the bags under the noses of the men and women respectively, who invariably drop a coin or two into its open black maw! And now the benediction, all standing, and out go the people into the wind-swept, brick-paved roadway, and home to the tea-drinking, and the rest of the day in visiting and gossiping over the events of the week.

Marken I find really scorns the tourists who throng the roadways even on the Sabbath. It is not considered good form to invite them into one's house. "Of course Marretje Thijssen Teerhuis does so, but then you see she is in the business—a public character, if you please, a professional really, not looked down upon at all, you understand, not at all, but"—and Mrs. Grundy of Marken shrugs her shoulders, her yellow curls bobbing up and down expressively. So you are to understand by this that Marken is jealous of old Marretje, who has such a snug

account in the Bank at Amsterdam, as well as a show house crammed full of the Dutch treasures so dear to the tourist.

In the afternoon of Sunday, the Langstraat is filled with walking groups of peasant women and young girls, while the men and boys stand or squat on the side pavements watching them. The women loiter about the window of the goldsmith, where are displayed tempting strings of coral beads and gold ornaments dear to womenkind of Marken, or pass in and out of the bake-shops talking loudly, eating sweetmeats noisily with uncouth grimaces and slapping each other on the back and hips at each fresh display of wit or rather free repartee, for the Marken people are very, very free of speech. These people have a very sweet tooth and spend much money in the bake-shops. The women are as fond of the white wine as the men are of gin, and the "ponte koek" goes well with both.

In passing the groups of women and girls who walk together holding on tightly to each other's hands, I found that one of their favorite forms of pleasantry was to give the passer-by a hard

shove by hip and shoulder often strong enough to throw the assaulted one off her feet. I generally betook myself on Sundays to a small garden in the rear of one of the houses which sold drink and coffee where the tourists never penetrate, and there the peasants, their sweethearts and wives congregate at round tables and solemnly consume large quantities of cake and wine. Here I usually sat listening to the conversation and adding to the small store of the difficult-to-remember dialect of Marken. At first suspicious of me, they gradually became accustomed to my presence, so that when I appeared at their gatherings my coming created no comment beyond a courteous, "Dag, Mynheer Schilderer." (Good day, Mr. Painter.)

Looking across the low meadows from the open window of the room which good old Marretje has so kindly placed at my disposal in her wonderful house, I can see the square brick tower of the church with its low, pointed, four-sided spire, and below, two of the clock faces upon which Marken depends. The tower and the high roof of the church rises far above the mel-

LIVING ROOM

low, red-tiled roofs of the clustering houses. Two canals like silver ribbons separate it from the house on the island where I lodge with Marretje amid such treasures of old silver, blue and white platters, brass pots and platters and ornate marquetry furniture, and serving as a sort of dado is a flapping strip of pink, yellow, blue and white clothes hung out to dry in the soft breeze. The grass grows rankly on the low meadow land in bands of rich golden yellow, tan and vivid green. Dark patches of tall grayish-green rushes grow rankly here and there on the borders of the canals, where old moss-covered flatboats are tethered. In them the children play, their shrill voices softened by distance. Some women and young boys are raking the rank grayish-green hay newly mown, and just under my window a very old wrinkled and bent woman in a tall embroidered cap from which hang two thick strands of yellow twisted silk, sits with a fat, ornately arrayed baby in her lap, the baby sucking a "bolij" of sugar tied up in a rag.

Girls of various ages pass and repass along the

brick-paved way in couples, all busily knitting coarse stockings of blue or saffron wool, the balls of which are often contained in small woven willow baskets hanging on the right arm.

Toward the harbor one or two brown sails alone are visible on weekdays, but on Sundays the harbor is quite filled with the fishing-boats. They are invariably of one mast, upturned at the bow like a wooden shoe, and bordered with a strip of red or pale green or saffron paint at the gun'le. Huge lee boards like wings are at each side and on the brown sails of tender tonal quality so appealing to a painter, are the large letters M K and the registry number in white paint. From the masthead streams invariably long thin horizontal red, white and blue wind flaps. I cannot see the men, but I know that they are there squatting in long rows, stolidly smoking their treasured clay pipes, and speculating upon to-morrow's fortunes at the fishing grounds.

And so passes peaceful Sunday in this quaint community.

Old Ary Lik

DAY by day one saw standing on the dike looking towards Monnickendam, an old man so motionless as to excite curiosity. A coarse felt hat the brim of which was held to the crown by stitches protected a head entirely bald save for a thin fringe of snow-white hair at the nape of the neck and over each ear. One could guess from the way in which the cheeks sank in, continuing the furrows about the mouth, that this toothless old fellow was more given to the bottle than the platter. On his pointed chin a rough stubble of white gave a sinister expression to his profile. The deep-set greenish-gray eyes were too small for his large bony face, and

sloping or slanting like those of a Chinese, betrayed cunning as well as laziness. They gleamed with a greeny blue light beneath the reddish lids. The clothing of this curious figure consisted of an absurdly short jacket of faded blue tight at the waist and wide baggy breeches, much patched and frayed, ending at the knee or below, thence long, thick, knitted stockings of rough wool and splintered wooden "Klompen" in which wisps of straw showed at the heels. This, I was told, was old Ary, the rope maker, who was so very deaf that, as my informant unfeelingly remarked, "There was no use talking to him." So they let him alone. Poor old man, he had outlived himself. Years ago, twenty or more, his wife had died, and since then he had gone down and down. He was no longer able to continue his trade, although he patiently endeavored to work along in the old way. His strength was unequal to the task, and his old wheel and the "walk" behind his dilapidated house at the sluice was dropping apart. One could buy good ropes now made by machinery at a price much lower than he de-

manded. The community no longer needed him, he had ceased to be of use. His attempts to adapt himself to the conditions were hopeless. He was too old to try to learn another trade, and since his wife's death he had lived on the little he had saved, but through improvidence and the bottle, the house and finally himself fell into a dilapidated state of wretchedness. Everything seemed to go to decay. The glass fell from the small windows and was replaced by pieces of boxes. His eyes failed him, then his ears. He was rheumatic, his joints creaked as well as the doors of his old house on their rusty hinges. They matched well, did the house and the man.

When his hearing failed, his last great pleasure was denied him—that right of old age, gossiping. He had ceased to be a part of the present, and the past had no existence. The world had no use for him, the world being of course Marken—he knew no other. His efforts to adapt himself to conditions were pathetic. Too old and too feeble to keep up with the new conditions which confronted him, he tried to exist

on the little he had saved. His deafness prevented him from understanding what was said to him, and so the peasants, ever seeking that which gave them least trouble, let him severely alone. The old man was not ill-natured with all this. He was lively of wit and ready of repartee, but his repartee was always in the wrong place because he misunderstood the subject in hand. Daily he sought the dike end where the boats of the fleet were tied up—but few of the fishermen paid any attention to him, and his loneliness increased and weighed heavily upon him. One could see him wandering about in search of someone to whom he might talk, and sitting in the sun his gaze fixed out over the waters of the Gouw Zee towards distant Volendam, and when the fleet sailed away bearing the lusty rollicking fishermen bound for the fishing grounds of the North Sea, he would linger on the dike waiting and watching for he knew not what. Thus did existence weigh heavily upon him.

One day I asked him to pose for me, and the task of making him understand what it was that

I required of him seemed hopeless. Into his ears first on one side, then on the other, I bawled my explanations and my shouts drew the ubiquitous children to the dike end where we sat. They came in hordes, and crowding around us shouted and screamed in delight at my efforts to make the old man understand. All at once a gleam of intelligence came into the watery green eyes and he smiled gleefully.

"Ah! Mynheer wants some good rope. It is well—willingly will I make it for him, at a fair price, too, three cents the foot, eh? Is not that fair and made by hand, too—no cursed machine twist—but made by hand!" Finally I made him comprehend dimly what I wanted and thereafter he served me as a model, and so I was able to help him along in a small way. But I soon discovered that his complacency and patience during the first period was largely due to the fact that mistaking my large bottle of "fixative" (a varnish) used to "fix" my charcoal drawings, for brandy, he had surreptitiously taken a long pull at it when my back was turned for a moment. When I discovered this I was

fearful that it would result disastrously for him, the basis being wood alcohol, but apparently he was none the worse for the fearful dose, for he was awaiting me bright and early the following morning, eager to go to work, his "insides" well varnished!

As the summer came to an end and winter drew nigh, the old man looked wretchedly forlorn. The fierce autumn wind whistled through his dilapidated house. I got a few bags of "stone coal" (Steen kool) for him, and thus he was enabled to keep warm, and he passed the cool autumn days huddling over the old fire box in his ramshackle dwelling. Finally I heard that he had decided to sell the old house, with the understanding that the purchaser should permit him to end his remaining days in it. Old Maretje bought it, and there was great excitement on Marken when she and the decrepit Ary appeared before the Burgomeester to complete the sale according to law. Such signing of papers was there; really if it had been the sale of the great Castle of Gravendeel itself, the business of it could not have been more formal. Wit-

VILLAGE STREET

nesses were called in and the fees paid over to them in conformance with the law of the Kingdom were proudly exhibited by the recipients, and as for the talk—well, anyone who has known Marken will picture to himself the conclaves over the dividing fences between the houses, and the eloquent discussions—The "I saids" and the "I saws" down to the smallest details, each narrator endeavoring to outclass the previous one in minutiæ. And so it was done. Through it all the pathetic figure of old Ary sat dazed and wondering, until finally the money being deposited in the strong box of Mynheer the Burgomeester, and a receipt given to him, Old Ary was led forth from the office.

Outside he and old Marretje had clasped hands, thus consummating the bargain after the manner of the peasants, and in the Koffij huis all had imbibed freely of "Genever," each at his own expense, for the affair was an exhausting one to them. The children escorted old Ary to the home that he had once owned, and with parting sarcastic witticisms left him only when from his open doorway he had cast several lumps of

his precious "steenkoolen" at them, which lumps he carefully rescued after their hilarious departure.

Ever provident and wise, old Marretje at once set about repairing the house, and workmen tore off the old roof and replaced it with new tarred boards after the fashion of Marken. The former owner sat on the dike disconsolately watching the process, bawling out orders to which the workmen gave no heed. The change was really a great shock to him, and finally when the new roof was on and the men had departed, he took to his bed. Thus I found him one day in the late fall, stretched out in the quaint green-painted wall bed in the low ceiled room with one window. Rigid and motionless he lay with one long lean arm and hand hanging over the side. When I touched him he started up wildly, crying out "Robbers! Thieves!"

Recognizing me at last, he grinned and shook my hand, but I could not make him understand me. The neighbors looked in on him and saw that he was fed, but with the apathy and indifference of the peasantry, they complained that

he apparently neither could get well nor "pass on." I went to the Burgomeester and laid the matter before him and induced him to make out the necessary papers to get the old man admitted to the "Huis" as it was called, where such helpless old folk were cared for by the State. This was finally accomplished not without much resistance upon his part, I was told, for I was not on Marken when he was removed. It is said that he lived only a few months in the hospital. Old Marretje says that the shock he received when they washed him and put him between clean sheets "finished him."

And so Marken knows him no more, and his place on the dike end is occupied by another, less picturesque it is true, but the boats come and go, as usual, and no one seems to miss Old Ary.

From My Window

THE house on the opposite side of the narrow canal is a typical one. Really there are four distinct habitations beneath the steep-sloping, moss-covered, red-tiled roof, which is of a delightful mellow patchwork of old and new work, and having tall brick chimneys protruding at unexpected places quite arbitrarily. The house like all the others is of tarred or pitch covered wooden wide boards placed horizontally below but vertically above the junction of the eaves. The gable end is towards the canal and here the earth is diked up forming a sort of level walk, and it is fringed sparsely with a grayish-green wiry coarse grass. There is a sort of bal-

ustrade of rough beams at intervals but this is simply to hang the nets upon. At first sight there seems to be a great confusion of old planks and marine impedimenta, but upon closer inspection one finds a certain order in it all. The windows of the house are few in number, each of a different size, having neatly painted white frames, with pale green shutters the center of which is invariably white. The doors have white frames, but the heavy doors are green and not paneled, and the hinges resemble those on country barns. Each house has a sort of bench beside the door, and here Mynheer, when he pleases, sits and smokes at his leisure.

In the canal is the reflection of the bright green paint of the doors, somewhat distorted by the wake of the duck that swims by, turning its head comically from side to side. Two or three extravagantly shaped boats are tied up to the bank, and in one of them sits a girl knitting. It would be hard to guess just how many yards of "stuff" there must be in her spread petticoats; on a bench beside one of the doors a brightly polished brass can reflects the sun. It is all so strange. Brass

hooped pails; green, blue and red cans; wooden "klompen" in rows beside the door; and the rolling figure of a man with a crop of black hair, red face, green pails, a pipe, baggy breeks and wooden shoes painted snow white, ambling along the dike. It is almost outrageously picturesque. "Hoe lang stoppen gij hier" (how long do you stop here), I am asked daily by someone, and I answer as best I can trying to satisfy their curiosity, but the question is not intended for impertinence, on the contrary. But I do not know myself how long I will stop with these quaint people who have received me so hospitably. It is hard to leave them.

—— To-day I am reading Motley, and trying to picture the Hollander of the time of Philip II, in big boots, and breastplate, defending his town to the last extremity, famine and pestilence within, while without is the dreary frozen landscape and the Spanish Inquisitors with gibbet, rack and slow fires ready. I try to imagine how the dockkeeper would look in a stiff white linen ruff, and the small pink-armed maid outside my window knitting in the old boat, would she stand

to the principles of her faith if put to the torture of the question before the grand Inquisitor in the castle? The modern Hollander is so mild in appearance, so slow in movement, so phlegmatic. Should you by chance meet him on the narrow dike face to face, he will stand his ground and wait calmly eying you the while without any evidence of ill-feeling whatever, until you move out of his way. It never occurs to him to step aside—I have tried it a half dozen times for myself, so I know.

Old Niklaas, the tinker, has just passed the window followed by his energetic vrouwe; he is plainly in liquor; he always is and doubtless always will be so; but his failing is not really harmful to anyone but himself, good natured as he is, clumsy, stupid, yet amusing. His vrouwe, a large masculine figure of a woman, although claiming to be out of patience with him, really appeared to appreciate the humor of his failing, hustling him along home and sending him to the loft to sleep off his "cups." But all at once her patience seemed to be exhausted. Just when and how the change took place I cannot

tell; but she began to attack him with most furious reproaches when he came home drunk. Niklaas at first stolidly accepted these reproaches as part of his fun, but at length, little by little, returned word for word until finally both lost whatever good humor they had, and so, as the saying is here "pulled and hauled upon it" by day and by night.

At length she succeeded in goading him to such a state that he, the gentle Niklaas, struck her and she ran out upon the dike before all the neighbors, screaming in hysterics, and thus matters are going badly with them. So now they lead a miserable existence, and both at one time so good natured, threaten to degenerate into a surly, vicious, quarrelsome pair.

Marken blames both for this, for although it is admitted that Niklaas gets drunk, yet the woman has always been used to it. The children, two of them, have grown up, married and betaken themselves to another part of the settlement. Thus she has only herself and the drunken Niklaas to care for. The complaint of the neighbors is not against Niklaas, but herself. They say

ST GIRLS

that she is a common scold and an anarchist in her ideas.

Marken is not so far away from the world that the people do not know something of Socialism but with it they have little sympathy. Thus they find *her* railing against the oppression of the rich quite tiresome, for this is the burden of *her* complaint, the rich taking their ease while the poor can hardly exist. This they think nonsense for she has always lived in a sort of comfort even while they had to support the children, and now that these are gone there is no apparent reason why they should not be at least equally well off.

Niklaas's habits and his waste of money is so different from what it was; he is usually idling and always getting drunk. And now Patje, that is her name, has taken to extravagance and is living quite beyond her means. She is keeping rabbits, geese and a pig. The latter is a huge hairy pink one with pendent ears and occupies the whole of the dark space beneath the house, only coming to the opening at regular intervals to groan and scream for food beginning at an un-

earthly hour in the dark of the morning when Marken is trying to sleep. They say that all the money she can scrape together goes for feed for this monster. So she has transferred to the pig, the geese and the rabbits the affection she once bore for Niklaas and the children. But it is for the pig that she slaves and pinches and screws, stuffing him so that he is at the bursting point, to the disgust of Niklaas, who at the dike end complains loudly to whosoever will listen to him. He says furthermore that she is extravagant, that she has bought two brass American kerosene lamps on the installment plan from a peddler, who calls every Monday for his money. Thus she is always poor, and complaining of the money Niklaas wastes on drink, and he retaliates by pointing to the gluttonous pig, the ravenous rabbits, the fat geese, and the two brass kerosene lamps, as unnecessary luxuries which will yet ruin him and send them both to the pauper colony at Veenhuisen.

Finally, one day I heard that Niklaas had taken his chest (every man on Marken has his chest containing his treasures, whatever they

may be, all under padlock) and gone over to his daughter's house to live, unable any longer to stand the scolding of his wife. When I met him on the dike, he was in a great state of excitement, and explained volubly that they could not agree with one another. There was, of course, a great scandal on Marken, the Heer Pastoor was sent for, and his arguments had such weight with Niklaas, that it all ended in his return to Patje, quite cowed and ashamed of himself, and now they have resumed the old life, but with something of a truce between them.

"Tot Weersiens"

THE morning of my departure from Marken dawned brightly, the sun mounting into a cloudless autumn sky as blue as the color on the quaint delft china arranged on the walls of the show house of Mistress Teerhuis. My belongings all carefully packed and strapped together were in a most orderly pile on the dike end and guarding them was Willum the fat boy, stolid and round eyed, more uncommunicative than usual, surrounded by his envious companions who covetously regarded the nickel chain and pendent seals stretched across his red flannel jacket attached to a fine Waterbury made watch in his breast pocket, which his patron, the Ameri-

can "Schilderer," had given him. Marken on this morning seemed to me as wonderful as if I had never seen it before, looking as unreal as though it were cut out of some picture book; the streets running just as they pleased and the red-roofed wooden houses standing as unevenly in rows as they possibly could. Windows, both white and green shuttered, small sheds with almost impossible gables, scroll work and poles project over the brick pavement, and high up from the steep roofs rise columns of smoke from the peat and coal fires. Here and there the old ditches are turned into kitchen gardens between the black piles and timbers of the houses. Along one side a rope maker twisted his strands on spidery wooden galleries. I could see him plainly—his body swinging to and fro as he turned the heavy wheel.

A girl in an orange bodice was getting water from a butt near him. I saw her turn and give him a drink from her pail, and then I heard her clear laugh at something he said.

At the dike lay the fishing boats all drawn up in an orderly row, their brown velvety hued sails

raised to dry them in the sun, and the men and boys busily washing down decks and arranging the tackle for the departure on the afternoon tide.

Screams and laughter came from throngs of children playing on the dike, and long lines of white ducks and ducklings walked solemnly up and down at the water's edge.

Beyond the lines of houses stretched the fair green meadows where the cows grazed with tinkling bells on their necks, and afar off I could hear the softened notes of a hand organ played by a wandering stroller and the shouts of the boys who surrounded him. I leaned against the heavy wooden white-topped piling waiting for the boat which was to bear me away from this quaint people who had so hospitably received me, and from whom I was parting with a real and deep feeling of regret. I had come to know them so well during these weeks of my stay among them, indeed to feel a real affection for some of them, rude and uncouth as they are. There was old Lisbeth with her daughter, a phenomenally fat baby on her arm, come to bid me good-by, which said, halt-

DAILY TASK

ingly and shyly, she lingered to see me go, pretending to be interested in the men salting their nets. Suddenly she came to me saying, "I would like to ask Mynheer a question. I want to know has Mynheer ever seen the Pope?"

I answered that I had not, and she seemed disappointed.

"Has the Pope a very large family? Has he a wife and many children?"

"The Pope is not allowed to marry," I answered.

"But that is not right," she said. "I don't like that. Of course he is not happy, is he?"

"Hij lacht niet. Hij dansen niet. Hij Bemint niet." (He laughs not. He dances not. He loves not.) "What then can he live for?"

I shook my head at her. I could think of no reply. So shifting the fat child to her other shoulder she made me a curtsy of farewell, and took herself off down the dike.

These people are so strange and so unlike any that I had ever before been thrown with, that I was forced always to be on my guard with them. Inquisitive to a degree, I could never foresee the

direction their questions regarding the outer world would take, and they hung so expectantly upon my answers that I was often forced to "spar for a time" so to say, in order to answer them correctly. They are so truthful themselves that any sort of "romancing" on my part would have cost me their friendship. Upon one point only is their veracity exposed to suspicion and that is the ghostly legend which flourishes upon Marken. These springing from antiquity, are sedulously fostered and cultivated and handed down with additions and improvements from generation to generation who take immense pride and pleasure in them.

The last night of my stay on Marken I was entertained by some of these legends in the house of old Marretje amid her blue china and shining brass. Marken is peculiar in its ghostly beliefs. Elsewhere perhaps peasants gather about the roaring fires on winter evenings and beguile the time with the recital of marrow-freezing tales, contributing to them willfully credulous minds, but I can confidently assert that this custom does not exist on Marken. People who

live upon solitary spots like this are little likely to introduce any supernatural spooks into their hard lot, or to people the wild blasts of winter wailing around their poor hovels with phantoms. On Marken then there is none of this Vult decipi. Old Marretje scoffs at them. Nevertheless she did tell me of fearsome things met on the meadows in the dark, and of strange forms cowering over the winter hearths in the dark of the small hours and vanishing into dusky corners whence none dare more than to surmise their ultimate place of abode. She told me of seeing herself a shadow lying all black as ink across the doorstep, with nothing there to cast it—falling cold as ice, too, upon whosoever dared to cross it.

She told me of a decrepit old woman, not in the Marken costume, mark you, who in winter nights comes tapping, tapping, at the outer door, who seems harmless enough until by chance you gaze into her eyes, then she laughs silently—without noise, mark you—and you never, never can forget her! And she speaks to you slowly—slowly—and this is what she says:

"Ben ik niet gegaan—Heb ik niet gezaid—
Heb ik niet verscheurd—Heb ik niet geweend—
Heb ik niet gehaad—Ben ik niet geweest?"

which translated means:

"Have I not walked—Have I not sown—Have I not torn—Have I not cried—Have I not had—Have I not been?"

One of the Marken tragedies she related as follows:

"It happened over on Bisschops vlie beyond the church, where a ruined half-fallen-down hut yet stands. A man sick with pestilence and out of his head, did bar himself with the small children in the hut, while the mother alone able to go out, went to the village over the ice in quest of food, and when at length she returned with meal and potatoes at night over the ice and through the drifts of deep snow, the man out of his mind with delirium did not or could not hear her knocking on the fastened door which she could not open. So through the long bleak night on the open meadow in the driving snow, she beat upon that closed door, while the children cried and the man raved and fought the visions of his

fever; and day dawned; men who passed along the dike saw no smoke from the chimney of the house, and going over found them all cold in death, the father and children fastened inside, the poor mother outside lying across the threshold in the deep drift against the closed door at which she had vainly knocked. Never has this cabin since been occupied and the grass and weeds grow undisturbed in its open doorway. Yet," said old Marretje nodding her head so that the yellow silk false curls at either side of her wrinkled old face bobbed up and down, "on certain nights this unfortunate woman may be seen standing in this black open doorway among the weeds. Should she heed you not, then pass on your way content and thankful. But on the contrary, should she lift her arms to you, fly—fly—for then troubles lie in store for you—black misfortune!"

So said old Marretje Teerhuis to me that last night of my stay on Marken in her blue-tiled kitchen on the dike.

To the casual observer there seems to be little real poverty on the island. The children, of

which there are myriads, are well clad and healthy looking, and I have seen no cripples among them. During the day, save on Saturday and Sunday, or when the boats are laid up at the dike end, as to-day, one sees few men, and these are very old ones.

At the end of the village where the houses are scattered, silence and solitude reign, save for the clicking of the wooden shoes of an old woman passing along laden with a heavy basket or a quaintly clad girl watching a flock of gabbling geese, knitting a long blue woolen stocking and never seeming to take her eyes from her twinkling needles.

Of live stock there is little, a few cows, a dozen or so screaming pigs and the geese make up the list. It is said that once upon a time there was a donkey in the village but that was long ago, long before the recollection of even old Marretje.

All the women knit stockings of the harsh feeling dark blue yarn, huge hanks of which hang in every house, and this must be a source of revenue to them, since a moderate knitter can and does finish a long stocking in a day.

I THE DYKE

In the season the tourists are lavish with their tips for glasses of "boreeltij" and the privilege of "snapshotting" the women and children. This morning they are sitting in a long line on the dike in the sun; some have children playing at their feet, but all the women are knitting. On the horizon is a cloud of black smoke in the direction of Amsterdam. It is the small steamer which is to bear me away. One by one the peasants come to say good-by to Mynheer t' Schilderer. Old Ary Bisschop, pipe in mouth, gives me a limp hand in farewell. Did I not know well his disposition, I might think him cold, but we had fished together on many occasions, at least he did the fishing while I looked on and urged the conversation. He presents me with a well-colored clay pipe in a carved boxwood case which I had admired, and manages to ejaculate what he considers a most affectionate farewell speech. After him is the tall wiry form of Jan Appel, the skipper, who won from me my Swedish knife which I do not begrudge him. He wears it attached to a knitted lanyard across his red woolen waistcoat, the silver buttons of which he pre-

sented to me last night. He shakes hands with me while over his leathern brown, clean-shaven face plays a smile of singular sweetness.

After him comes the Koek-bakker, who disbelieved my tales of the wonders of New York, particularly those of the subway and the elevators in the Singer Tower, but who nevertheless is inclined to-day to overlook what he considers my mendacious inventions. He presents me surreptitiously with a well-worn silver ring which he wore on the fourth finger of his left hand. He picked a small piece of dough from it before he handed it to me, asking if I would wear it, which I promised to do with pleasure.

He gave way to big Piet Smet who bore a large package in his hands tied in a piece of sacking with coarse fish line. This he explained was the model of the fishing boat which hung over his mantel and which I had long admired and coveted. Would I accept it, he asked shyly. Would I not indeed? I answered delightedly. As a favor he asked that I send him some picture papers from that great New York of which I had told him such wonders. And he believed them,

too, wagging his cropped head at me, "Not like that 'Koek-bakker' over there—he knew that what I said was true—had he not asked the Heer Pastoor? Did not the Heer Pastoor believe what I had told them? Well then—what would you—It was all true!" "Wij zijn niet beloefd (we are not polite) to doubt Mynheer's word!"

And now came Mevrouwe Marretje Teerhuis to say good-by. This was a great honor which she paid me, and I hastened to take her hand and to tell her how much I appreciated her coming to the dike end. Her old eyes twinkled as she made me her curtsy, and then she placed a long thick package in my hand, saying, "Dat zult ge zeker nooit raden (I am sure you will never guess) what it is that I give you."

"But yes," I replied, "I know that it is that lovely old brass candle snuffer that you would not sell me—and I thank you indeed for it." And so with hearty good-bys from these people who had received me so cordially, and been so kind to me, I passed down the steep plank onto the puffing little grimy black steamer which was to bear me away from this strange island in the

Zuyder Zee. I passed to the after deck under the awning and then the line was cast off. The steamer swung off, turned in a wide circle between the dikes, the captain rang the jingle bell twice, and out we passed swiftly on the way to Amsterdam. Looking back I saw the people still standing on the dike end, the costumes of the women making a brilliant blaze of color against the cloudless sky. I waved my hand to them, but they did not respond. Then the captain blew the whistle three times, and I saw the people on the dike end wave their hands to us. So they passed from my sight.

"Tot Weersiens."

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